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STUDIES IN SHAKESPEARE

BY

RICHARD GRANT WHITE

EDITOR OF THE RIVERSIDE EDITION OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

FIFTH EDITION

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

A NUMBER of Shakespearean studies, which have been published from time to time in periodical form, are gathered in this volume. All of them have been revised, and some of them have been condensed and emended by the author; who also added fresh matter on Shakespeare Glossaries and Lexicons, and a note on Mr. Walker's "Critical Examination of the Text."

It was while preparing this book for publication, that Mr. Grant White was seized by the long and painful illness from which recovery became impossible. His work upon it had so nearly reached completion, however, that little remained to be done beyond the customary corrections for the press. And his readers will remember, should inaccuracies appear in its pages, that they did not receive these last finishing touches from the hand now laid at rest forever.

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STUDIES IN SHAKESPEARE.

ON READING SHAKESPEARE.

I. PLAYS OF THE FIRST PERIOD.

MANY letters have come to me during the last few years asking what seems to me a very strange question — How to read Shakespeare. My answer would naturally be: the way to read Shakespeare is — to read him. The rest follows as matter of course. If, not having read before, you read anywhere, you will know a new delight; you will read more; you will go on; in your eager reading you will consume the book. Having read all, you will read again, and now will begin to ponder, and compare, and analyze, and seek to fathom; and having got thus far, you will have found an occupation which lights with pleasure the whole of your leisure life. This seems to me to be the natural way of reading Shakespeare. This is the way in which I have found that most of the truest lovers of Shakespeare came to know him, to delight in him, and finally to wait upon him with a kind of intellectual worship. It is hard for these men to apprehend that there are others not without intelligence and education, and who read, who have not read Shakespeare, or who having read a little of him do not read more. But there are such men; and there are still many more such women. On the whole I am inclined to think that

Shakespeare is not a woman's poet. He deals too largely with life; he handles the very elements of human nature; he has a great fancy, but is not fanciful; his imagination moulds the essential and the central rather than the external; he is rarely sentimental, never except in his youngest work. Women, with the exception of a few who are not always the most lovable or the happiest of the sex, like something upon a lower plane, something that appeals more directly to them, because it was written to appeal directly to some one else (for in literature that which is directed to one point always keeps its aim); they like the personal, the external; that which seems to be showing them either themselves or some other real person. Shakespeare's humor, which is equalled by no other, but most nearly approached by Sir Walter Scott's when he is in his happiest moods, is appreciated by still fewer women than the number who find pleasure in his poetry. They receive it in rather a dazed fashion, and don't know exactly what it means. All this, just as they would rather look at a woman of the first fashion in a dress of their time than at the grand simplicity of ideal woman in the Venus (so-called) of Melos.

Then there are people who read Shakespeare as an elder acquaintance of my boyish years read him. He asked me if I would lend him my Shakespeare. Stripling as I was, I thought it a strange thing for a fellow who lived in a big, handsome house to borrow; but I lent him my treasure. He brought it back the day but one afterward, with the remark that he "liked it very much," which I heard with mingled amusement and amazement. Yet he was a not unintelligent youth, did well in life, and becoming a man of wealth,

developed in one department of art "quite a taste." Perhaps if he had had some advice about reading Shakespeare he would not have returned the volume containing his entire works after thirty-six hours' possession, with just that expression of approval.

Most of those who have asked this advice are, I am inclined to think, very young, as indeed some of them say they are; and a large proportion are plainly girls just beginning to feel their way in literature, and they ask, in the words of one of them, "How shall I begin? and which plays shall I read first, so as to be sure to like them and their author?" Such uncertainty, I must confess, does not promise any genuine, strong taste for Shakespeare. Boys are of slower mental growth than girls, especially upon the poetical and sentimental side; but no boy who is a born Shakespeare-lover needs to ask such a question as that at sixteen. He has then already stepped in too far to pick his way or to turn back.

In beginning to read Shakespeare the first rule — and it is absolute and without exception, a rare rule indeed — is to read him only. Throw the commentators and the editors to the dogs. Don't read any man's notes, or essays, or introductions, æsthetical, historical, philosophical, or philological. Don't read mine. Read the plays themselves. Be absolutely unconcerned what is their origin, what the date of their production, or what the condition of their text. Don't attempt criticism, either æsthetic or verbal; above all keep your mind entirely free from the influence of what this or that eminent critic has said about them. Read at first chiefly, rather only, for the story; that is, for the dramatic development and interest of the plot. If you have the capacity of appreciating Shakespeare, you

will find that it takes hold of you at once. But don't hurry through a play as you would through a society novel, skipping the unessential, or what seems to you to be so. Don't skip anything; even the briefest scene or the most trivial speech of the most unimportant personage. Shakespeare flung abroad his wealth; for his hand was full of it, and it fell upon all his creatures. The lips of his very peasants and beggars drop jewels. But until you have mastered the story, and have a clear and strong apprehension of the dramatic relations of the personages, do not stop any longer than you must needs to admire even the matchless beauty of his utterance. There is time enough for that. That is a pleasure that will last your whole life, and grow greater as you grow older. Look at the men and women that he sets before you, and see the way of their moral and mental growth, and the way that they work upon each other, and what comes in the end of what they are and what they do.

After you have read all the plays in this way, with a few exceptions which I shall point out, you may then begin to study Shakespeare as a poet, and, with the help of critics, to observe his use of language — that which is peculiar to him, and that which is peculiar to his time; to inquire into the allusions that he makes to subjects which are new to you because they are old; to examine the construction of his plays, and the manner in which they were developed from the tales, the chronicles, and the older plays upon which they are founded. In a word, you may then enter upon the critical study of Shakespeare, for which of course a critical edition is necessary. But first, and above all, begin by reading him, pure and simple, and in an humble and receptive spirit. When

you meet with anything, either in the language or in the action of the personages, that you do not understand, or which seems unnatural or out of keeping, assume, for the nonce at least, that Shakespeare, or even his editors, may be right and you wrong. Don't waste much time in beating your head against the difficulty, but leave it as a subject for future consideration, and go on with the play.

The plays which you would do well to pass over in your first reading are, "Titus Andronicus," "Pericles," "King Henry VI.," and perhaps "Love's Labour's Lost." The reasons for the omission of these plays from your acquaintance-making with Shakespeare are: that "Titus Andronicus" is a horrible, coarse, and childishly constructed tragedy, filled with bombastic language and bloody deeds, — a play of which Shakespeare wrote but a part; it being chiefly the work of Christopher Marlowe, and probably George Peele, two playwrights who were elder contemporaries of his, and with whom he worked more or less in the beginning of his theatrical life: — that "Pericles," although it is rich, particularly in the later acts, in work of Shakespeare's best period, was not planned by him, and was written by him only in part, and cannot be read as an example of his dramatic characterization or with much pleasure by a novice in Shakespeare reading, because of its very unskilful construction, and repulsive, puerile story: — that "King Henry VI." is open to exceptions of the same kind as to authorship, the particulars of which need not be given here: — and that "Love's Labour's Lost," although it is Shakespeare's beyond question, and his probably without the interpolation of a single line by another playwright, lacks dramatic interest in its construction

and its dialogue, and is full of cold conceits and of personages more like stage puppets than those which appear in any other of Shakespeare's undoubted works. One reason of this is that "Love's Labour's Lost," we may be sure, is the first existing play that he wrote single-handed; an almost boyish production. And yet his worthy reader will find in it touches of fancy, of humor, and even of wisdom, which we know could then have come from no other hand. Considering who wrote it, its chief lack, regarded even as a youthful work, is in poetic fancy. Of knowledge of human nature it displays a remarkable store in one so young as its author was. The reading of it ought not to check the enthusiasm of a true Shakespeare lover at any period of his pupilage.

At what time of life the reading of Shakespeare may be begun with profit and with pleasure, it is hard to say. One thing is sure: it is never too late to begin, and however late, always begin in just this way. The young reader may begin Shakespeare reading at the first temptation to do so. A one-volume edition of Shakespeare's plays is a good book to leave in the way of young people. It may do them a great deal of good; it can do no one of them any harm. There is no art or mystery in reading Shakespeare. It should not be thrust upon any one, but be left to come by nature; for if it come not in that way, look for it in no other. I have said that most boys who are Shakespeare lovers have the love strongly upon them before they are sixteen. Such I know was my own case. I was not fifteen when, to my father asking, as he saw my delight in my hand, which of the plays I liked best, I answered, "King Lear;" surprising him, as I found, for he had supposed that I

would say, "Romeo and Juliet." But I had been brought up on the Bible, which I had read until even at this day I know it better than I know any other book, and this with the "Pilgrim's Progress" and the Waverley novels, every one of which I had read over and over again, had made poor books distasteful to me, and awakened in me a greed for the good; for which wise training of my boyhood I cannot be too grateful. Let therefore no young person shrink from beginning an acquaintance with Shakespeare on the ground of youth, or through fear of not understanding him. True, all young people will find much in his pages that they cannot fully comprehend, and some things that they may not quite apprehend; but so will old people; there is always some new revelation to be received from Shakespeare. So I was told in my youth by old people who had loved and read him from youth to age; and so I have found, myself, as years have gone by.

As to the play with which it is best for a young reader of Shakespeare to begin, I should not hesitate to say that the first play in most editions, "The Tempest," is as good as any, although it is among the last productions of his later years as a dramatic writer. The novelty and interest of its personages and its situations, its simple construction, and its poetry, which soars but never gets among the clouds or into atmosphere too rare for ordinary mortals' breathing, make it the source of a pleasure that no one capable of literary art can fail to drink in with a delight unknown before. The tempest ceases, and the lowering sky breaks, after the first scene; the rest is filled with the light of coming happiness. If not this, "As You Like It" might first be taken up; then

"The Merchant of Venice" and "Much Ado about Nothing." To these "Romeo and Juliet" might well succeed, after which a return to the comedies would be advisable, except that I should recommend that "All 's Well that Ends Well," "The Winter's Tale," and "Measure for Measure" should be left until the last, and indeed until the reader shall have made further acquaintance with the tragedies, and read at least two of the histories — the First and Second Parts of "King Henry IV." To these it would be well to pass from "The Merry Wives of Windsor," because of Falstaff, whose humor appears in its lowest (yet high) form in "The Merry Wives," and in its highest in the Second Part of "Henry IV." The reader cannot now well go astray; but I should advise that the Roman and Grecian plays should be left until the last, "Troilus and Cressida" being read last of all; not because of any superiority, although it is one of Shakespeare's greatest works, but because of a peculiarity which I shall speak of further on.

The plays (with the exceptions named) having been read in this way once (but two or three times would be better), the Shakespeare-lover will wish to know them more intimately, to study their language, to understand their construction, to fathom their thought and their feeling. But before doing this he should read the poems, remembering that "Venus and Adonis" is a very youthful production, and not in Shakespeare's peculiar manner, but in the manner of the time, and that "Lucrece," although freer in style, is open to the same criticism. One reading will suffice for these.

The "Sonnets" are of an altogether different cast.

Whatever was their occasion, they came from Shakespeare's heart of hearts. Whoever can read them once, and not read them again and again, borne on and up by their strong flow of feeling, lost in the fascinating mystery of their allusions, has not the root of the matter in him, and may as well attempt to see no further into Shakespeare than a very little way below the surface. This done, in the more thoughtful re-reading of the plays it will be well to take a course which follows the development of Shakespeare's mind, reading his plays in the order of their production, so far at least as that has been discovered with reasonable probability. For we know so little about Shakespeare that even the order in which he wrote his plays must be determined by inference from internal and external evidence. It is as a guide to such a course that the following remarks upon the plays are offered.

The reader who, having mastered and enjoyed the whole of the plays, although only in outline as it were, returns to "Love's Labour 's Lost," or then takes it up for the first time, will see one of the most striking examples in all literature of the difference that exists between mature and immature genius of the highest order. The whole play is stiff and crude (remember that we are standing upon the Shakespearean plane); its personages show germs of character or imperfect outlines, rather than character; they are book-made, and, like most very youthful work, show reminiscence, with little of that modification and enrichment by which greatly gifted minds, imparting their gifts, render reminiscences their own.[1] The play is constructed upon a fantastic conceit, and indeed, with "The Com-

[1] In the Introduction and Notes to this play in my edition, 1857, this view and what follows are more particularly set forth.

edy of Errors" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream," belongs to the region of pure fantasy. The first and last of these three plays are almost like glorified fairy pieces or masques; the "Errors" being like a glorified burlesque. Shakespeare doubtless formed it in a measure upon the model of the court comedies of his elder contemporary John Lilly, the author of "Euphues," a very clever book, but quaint, stiff, little read, less understood, and therefore much misrepresented. But fantastic and jejune as the play is, observe in the drawing of Birone and Rosaline, stiff and formal although it is, like that of one of Raphael's early Perugine Madonnas, tokens of the hand which afterward drew Benedick and Beatrice with such freedom and such strength. Note the worldly wisdom which appears in this work of a young man of twenty-three or twenty-four; of which I cite first three well known surprisingly sagacious lines: —

> A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
> Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
> Of him that makes it.
>
> Act V. Sc. 2.

Then these not less sagacious, but not so well known as they should be: —

> Small have continual plodders ever won
> Save base authority from others' books.
> These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights
> That give a name to every fixed star
> Have no more profit of their shining nights
> Than those that walk and wot not what they are.
>
> Act I. Sc. 1.

But remark chiefly the wisdom with which Rosaline disciplines Birone, almost "chastising him with the valor of her tongue." She preaches at him too much, it is true; but none the less it is great sermonizing to come from a young actor's pen. This play, Shake-

speare's first, has the remarkable distinction of being the only one which contains a passage in praise of woman — a theme upon which other poets have been so copious. Shakespeare's women are far beyond the creative power of other poets and dramatists; but only in this play, of all the thirty-seven, does he speak one word in praise of the sex, and that with no very exalted feeling, so that it does not amount to praise of woman in the abstract.[1] This neglect to pay tribute of praise to the sex, and the fact that passages of an opposite bearing may be found in Shakespeare's works, cannot be without significance; and I attribute it to his ill fortune in his wife and afterward in his mistress — that beautiful dark woman whose infidelity to him with his best friend he reproaches so bitterly in the "Sonnets." For that the more important of those "Sonnets" were not written as an expression of personal feeling is to me improbable to the verge of incredibility.

The next play of this little group, "The Comedy of Errors," is a mere interweaving of farcical *contretemps* which come of the likeness of two twin masters and two twin servants who have been separated since childhood. It is an imitation of Plautus's "Menæchmi," of which Shakespeare saw a translation which he took, as a mere playwright, and worked it over into something that would please his audience. In this "Errors" the thought is of lighter weight than in any other of his undoubted works; lighter even than in "Love's Labour 's Lost" or "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Naturally it is so from the character of the plot, which

[1] The few lines of Act IV. Sc. 3, beginning "From women's eyes." When, some fifteen years ago, I made the assertion that Shakespeare had written nothing in praise of woman it was received with astonishment, denial, and derision.

is not only, like those of the two others, impossible, although supposable, but coarsely farcical rather than fanciful. It is a burlesque of the supposable impossible. Yet observe how, notwithstanding this, in the serious passages which merely serve as a stable framework for the fantastic fun, a knowledge of human nature crops out as it had done in no other play written before by a modern dramatist. Here is Shakespeare's first exhibition of jealousy; and it is the woman who is jealous. And indeed women only are truly jealous. To this rule the exceptions among men are very rare; sexual jealousy being essentially a feminine passion. This we shall see when we come to consider the cases of Othello, Claudio, and Leontes. Adriana, being jealous of her husband — that is, suspicious that she has not his love, that he slights her person — breaks out thus against him to her sister: —

> I cannot, nor I will not, hold me still.
> My tongue, though not my heart, shall have his will.
> He is deformed, crooked, old and sere,
> Ill-faced, worse bodied, shapeless everywhere;
> Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind,
> Stigmatical in making, worse in mind.
>
> Act IV. Sc. 2.

To which the sister thus unanswerably replies: —

> Who would be jealous then of such a one?
> No evil lost is wail'd when it is gone.
>
> Act IV. Sc. 2.

Then comes the fine feminine touch: —

> Ah! but I hold him better than I say,
> And yet would herein others' eyes were worse.
> Far from her nest the lapwing cries away:
> My heart prays for him, though my tongue do curse.
>
> Act IV. Sc. 2.

Woman is very concretely faithless in this matter, and will slander sometimes, to her rival, the very man she dotes upon, in hopes that thereby she may

keep him to herself. The passage just quoted is very rude work for Shakespeare. It lacks all the delicacy and subtleness of suggestion with which he in his later plays deploys any passion, particularly on the part of a woman. But nevertheless, as a whole, this is a revelation of natural feeling in speech very far superior to anything of the kind that had been written before by a dramatist in any modern language. And afterward the abbess of a convent in which Antipholus takes sanctuary, he being supposed to be mad, talks with Adriana about her treatment of her husband; tells her that she did not reprehend him enough for his wanderings, or at least not roughly enough, or only in private, and again, not enough; by which she craftily leads Adriana to this strong plea of self-justification:

> It was the copy of our conference:
> In bed he slept not for my urging it;
> At board he fed not for my urging it;
> Alone, it was the subject of my theme;
> In company I often glanced it;
> Still did I tell him he was vile and bad.
>
> Act V. Sc. 1.

Whereupon the abbess, having ingeniously got at the truth and gained her point, thus promptly replies:

> *And thereof came it that the man was mad:*
> The venom clamours of a jealous woman
> Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.
>
> Act V. Sc. 1.

Nothing like this had then been written in a modern play, and we might almost safely say in modern literature. And Shakespeare when he wrote this was only about twenty-six years old. True, he married when he was but eighteen a woman eight years older than himself, and lived with her some three or four years before he escaped to London, where he lived, not with her, until he was about forty-eight.

"A Midsummer-Night's Dream," although in the same category with the two plays already remarked upon, shows a great advance upon them, and in my opinion was written, or at least completed, some three or four years later than either. Because it belongs to the same fanciful or fantastical school in its construction, some critics have inferred that the three were written in close succession. This, however, seems too strait a limitation of mental action on the part of a playwright, if not of a poet. Must we assume that Shakespeare adhered to one method so strictly, and exchanged his style so suddenly and so absolutely that there was a violent and visible rupture, and that he wrote nothing in his fanciful style after a certain year, and nothing in another manner before it? Is it not rather according to the common course of intellectual development that such changes should be somewhat gradual? Certainly great painters and poets, great masters of all arts, have not unfrequently reverted, to a certain degree at least, to a former manner before they abandoned it entirely. This course of events is intellectual growth; the former would be intellectual transmutation. "A Midsummer-Night's Dream" may have been one of its author's earliest dramatic conceptions, but in its execution it shows, both in thought and in structure, and no less in poetical form, a marked mental development in the author of "Love's Labour 's Lost" and the "Errors."

The "Dream" seems to be in substance and in structure entirely Shakespeare's. No prototype of it is known either in drama or in story. And it is in these respects of very much higher quality than either of the others. Like them, indeed, it is fantastical and impossible; but unlike them, it has a real human in-

terest, while its satire is that of a man who has had opportunities of studying his fellow-men widely as well as closely, and its poetry is very far beyond theirs in beauty both of form and of spirit. For the first time we have here a personage whose character has made him a widely known and accepted type.[1] The conceited, pretentious man of some ability, who is yet an ass, has in Nick Bottom his earliest and also his most admirable representative in literature. On the other hand, we have in this comedy the first childing of its author's fruitful fancy, and of his ability to clothe his fancies in phrases of delicious beauty, the sweetness of which never palls upon ear or mind. The enchanting compliment to Queen Elizabeth is perhaps the finest example in poetry of fancy pushed to the verge of extravagance, and yet kept within the limits of good taste. But although the most admirable passage of its kind in the comedy, it is only one of many of that kind. Two or three lines of it are very familiar; but its highest beauty is in the sustained grace and elevation of the whole; and for that reason, and for another important one, I quote the whole:

Oberon. Thou rememb'rest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music?
Puck. I remember.
Oberon. That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,

[1] Unless we except Jack Cade, the type of the ignorant crafty demagogue. Cade, however, is not only much inferior to Bottom, but he is of doubtful origin, as he appears in the First Part of *The Contention*, etc., which was rewritten as the Second Part of *King Henry VI.*

> And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
> As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
> But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
> Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
> And the imperial votaress passed on,
> In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
>
> Act II. Sc. 1.

The last line is the most beautiful example in all literature of the beauty of alliteration — a trait of style which may become, and often does become, pestilent. But turning for the moment from this passage, the beauty of which is of a kind that appears in a marked degree in no earlier play of Shakespeare's, and indicates a rapid development of high poetic faculty, I direct the reader's attention to another manifestation of mental growth — that poetical sententiousness which is so peculiar a trait of Shakespeare; that faculty of welding together truth, wisdom, and fancy in such a closely wrought unity that they are essentially one, and that it is impossible even to distinguish the one from the other. Such, for example, is that passage upon imagination, with its fine distinction between apprehension and comprehension, and its description of the poet's method and function.[1] This is a long step in advance of anything of its kind that Shakespeare had produced before. And thus the play, although it bears the marks of youth — the youth of Shakespeare — and although it belongs to the class in which fancy predominates, and the fantastic-impossible is the groundwork of the action, and the depths of man's nature are left unsounded, rises as a whole into the upper, although not the topmost, heaven of dramatic poetry, and is the first of the works of its author which lift him into a place which others only approach.

[1] "Lovers and madmen have such seething brains," etc. Act V. Sc. 1.

The observant reader of these three comedies (whom I suppose to have made himself generally acquainted with the whole of the plays) will be struck by the form of their poetry. They contain a great deal of rhyming verse. This is an outward and visible sign of Shakespeare's youthful work; a sign which, taken in connection with his tone of feeling and his cast of thought, enables us to classify his plays according to their periods of production. For as his mind matured, his taste purified itself, and his hand acquired dramatic power and freedom, he cast off the fetters of rhyme, so that even in the plays of his second or middle period it rarely clogs the dramatic utterance of his personages. But there is another external indication of poetical progress, even in these three early plays. The blank verse changes in character. Read the passage quoted above from "A Midsummer-Night's Dream" with careful attention to its structure, and mark its easy flow. See how the pauses are varied, how the course of the thought and of the rhythm is carried on beyond the end of a line to find a pause or a half pause in the body of the next line. See how the answer of Puck completes a verse left incomplete by Oberon. There is no blank verse of corresponding variety and beauty in "Love's Labour's Lost" or the "Errors." In them the pauses and the ends of the verses almost always coincide; and the rhythm is comparatively formal and constrained. This difference, as I have already remarked, is another trait of Shakespeare's poetical growth. The change in the rhythm of his blank verse is one of the guides to the period of the production of his several plays; one which we cannot trust absolutely, and which indeed has itself to be studied and determined

in connection with facts which establish or at least limit the dates of production, but which, when once we have thus got upon its trail, rarely fails to lead us aright.

About the same time that Shakespeare wrote these three plays he entered upon another dramatic field — that of the comedy of society — and produced "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," which should be taken up next by the reader who wishes to follow the course of his dramatic and poetic development. Whether it was written before or after the time when "A Midsummer-Night's Dream" was completed and produced, we cannot, I think, be quite sure. I am inclined to the opinion that the latter, *as we have it*, contains later work than appears in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," which, although of a higher sort, is much inferior in point of art to the former. It is one of the weakest of Shakespeare's plays; but yet it is a very much better comedy in every respect than had been written before by a modern dramatist. It has some charming passages and some fine touches of pure Shakespearean humor. But it lacks thoughtfulness (for him); it is unfinished, feeble in characterization, and improbable and almost offensive in some of its incidents. The lovers, except sweet Julia, do not seem to be thoroughly in earnest, or to be touched with the fine fire of that passion as it is generally lit up by Shakespeare. It shows that Shakespeare had not freed himself from the influence of the prose romancers of his early day, in whose tedious and unnatural tales such incidents as Silvia's giving the rejected Proteus her picture, Valentine's giving up Silvia to Proteus, and Proteus offering violence to Silvia, are not uncommon. It has rhymed dialogue;

and its best blank verse is much inferior to the best blank verse of "A Midsummer-Night's Dream." Still it is the first comedy of society in our literature which is at all tolerable as a representation of the daily intercourse of real human beings. It is to be remarked that in no department of the drama, comedy, history, tragedy, is there extant any play earlier than Shakespeare which is entirely acceptable because of its intrinsic value. And this not because we are so dazzled by the splendor of his genius that we are blinded to the lesser lights that rose upon the world before him, but because they failed entirely to do what he did supremely. He was really first as well as greatest.

From these comedies the reader would do well to turn to the earliest historical plays, which were produced about the same time with them, or soon after, and which will next engage our attention.

II. PLAYS OF THE SECOND PERIOD.

Our examination of Shakespeare's plays, in search of a course of reading them which, following the order of their production, would enable us to trace the development of his mind as a poet, a playwright, and a philosophical observer of human nature, has led us to the time when he entered upon the composition of his remarkable series of historical plays, called by his fellow actors and first editors, in the first collected edition of his works (1623), "histories." This kind of play is not peculiar to Shakespeare, nor was he by any means the first either to introduce it upon the English stage or to bring it into popular favor. Indeed, it is to be remarked, and noted as a fact full of

significance, that Shakespeare, the greatest of the creative minds who have left their mark upon the ages, produced nothing new in design. His supreme excellence was attained simply by doing better than any one else that which others had done before him, and which others did after him, with the same purpose, upon the same plan, and with the same art motive. This fact, and the other previously mentioned, that Shakespeare did his work with no other purpose whatever, moral, philosophical, artistic, literary, than to make an attractive play which would bring him money, should be constantly borne in mind by the critical and reflective reader of his plays. The clear apprehension of them will save him from wandering off, himself, or being led off by others — profound people who set themselves very solemnly to the task of seeing what is not to be seen — into various fantastical byways which will end in profound bogs and pitfalls, or, like the road we have heard of, in a foot-path that tapers off into a squirrel-track that will leave him who follows it "up a tree."

Shakespeare wrote "histories" because, others having written them before him, it was found that the theatre-going people of the day liked them, and he, I feel quite sure, began at first to write them in connection with other playwrights, after the fashion of the time; when it was customary for two or three dramatic poets, or even more, to work together in the production of one play. When he first went into the theatrical business there was no reason why he should be exempted from any of its laws or customs. He was only a young man from the provinces who had come up to London to seek his fortune; and he might

well be glad, and we may be sure that he was glad, to be admitted to write in company with other playwrights who had already established some reputation. His first dramatic work — that is, such work as was undertaken for a theatrical company and with prospect of immediate performance, or, what was more important to him, payment — would naturally be of this kind. That he had already written poetry, I think much more than probable, almost certain; but his first dramatic work that went before the public was, I am of the opinion, a part of two plays called "The Contention of the Houses of York and Lancaster," and "The True Tragedy of the Duke of York," which he wrote in collaboration with Christopher Marlowe, George Peele, and probably Robert Greene, three playwrights who were in very high repute when he went up to London. These historical plays may be found reprinted in Charles Knight's "Pictorial Edition," and in the Cambridge edition of Shakespeare's Works; but I should not advise any person who has not the desire and the intention to make a very thorough critical study, not only of Shakespeare, but of Elizabethan dramatic literature generally, to undertake the reading of them. They afford neither instruction nor pleasure. Parts of them are very dreary; and all that is in them of Shakespeare's, I believe, he afterward took out and incorporated in the Second and Third Parts of "King Henry VI.," as they appeared in the collected editions of his works. The reasons of this opinion will be found fully set forth in my "Essay on the Authorship of the Three Parts of Henry VI.;" and they were afterward ably summarized and enforced in an abridgment of that essay by another

writer, which took the Harkness Shakespeare Essay prize at Cambridge University, England.[1]

The reader who wishes really to study Shakespeare's mind in its peculiarities and its development would do well to go carefully over my essay; and, as an ingenious setting forth of another theory, which I regard as entirely untenable, that Shakespeare had no hand in the construction and real writing of these plays, I commend to his attention an essay by the Rev. F. G. Fleay, in "Macmillan's Magazine" for November, 1875. Then let him read the Second and Third Parts of "King Henry VI." Part I. may be left unread; Shakespeare had little if anything to do with the writing of it; but possibly he may have touched its substance and modified its form here and there, sufficiently to bring it into keeping, for stage purposes, with Parts II. and III., and with "Richard III.," which was produced very soon afterward. In all these plays the observant reader will find marks of Shakespeare's 'prentice hand, and also, if he is at all familiar with the dramatic poetry of the early Elizabethan period, of the influence of Marlowe and Peele.

The pretence which has been made for Shakespeare, that none of his work at any period of his life resembles that of any other poet or playwright, and can always be separated from that of his co-workers, is entirely irreconcilable with the facts and the probabilities of the case, and with the history of all arts, poetry included. True, Shakespeare's mind was, in the highest and largest sense of the terms, original and creative. But such minds, no less than others of narrower and

[1] It is almost imperatively necessary that I should mention this fact in self-protection. The judges, as I have reason to believe, recognized it; but they felt obliged to give their decision "in favor of the best essay before them," as it was not a bald plagiarism.

inferior power, are imitative in their first essays. They, like others, may attempt at first some new, strange thing; they may possibly strive to be original, although they are less likely to do so than the smaller and weaker men. For a seeking after originality is one of the sure accompaniments, or at least one of the unmistakable tokens, of a felt although perhaps an unconscious mental weakness. To original creative minds their originality and their creative powers come spontaneously and by a development more or less slow, and the originality always comes unsought. In the early work of even such strong, original minds in art as Raphael and Michael Angelo, Mozart and Beethoven, we find not only traces of their predecessors, but such absolute assimilation to them in form and in spirit that were it not for slight touches, manifestly in the least labored and least purposed passages, we could believe them the productions of some one of their elder contemporaries.

In the Second and Third Parts of "King Henry VI.," therefore, and in "Richard III.," which contain the earliest of his historical works, we find traces of the principal dramatic poets whom he found in possession of the stage when he took to it for a living. Marlowe and Peele are those who seem to have impressed him most. A likeness to both these, and largely to Peele, appears in "Richard III.," which, although (because of its rapid recurrence of exciting scenes and incidents, its turbulent action, and the centring of the interest upon one chief personage) it is the greatest favorite of all the histories for the stage, is yet the poorest and thinnest in thought, the least free and harmonious in rhythm — in a word, the least Shakespearean of them all. Compare it with "Richard II.,"

which was written a year or two after it, and in which Shakespeare seems to have taken his first great step toward originality in style and in the treatment of his material. As not unfrequently happens in such cases, he went too far, and produced a play the very reverse in style and spirit of "Richard III." It is a tragic dramatic poem rather than an historical play. The action, which in the earlier history of the later Richard is so vivid, lags; the movement is languid, and passages of reflection and contemplation abound. It has passages which are somewhat in Shakespeare's early and constrained manner both as to thought and versification. Such are these: —

> Old John of Gaunt, time-honour'd Lancaster,
> Hast thou, according to thy oath and band,
> Brought hither Henry Hereford thy bold son,
> Here to make good the boisterous late appeal,
> Which then our leisure would not let us hear,
> Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?
>
> Act I. Sc. 1.

> Alas, the part I had in Glou'ster's blood
> Doth more solicit me than your exclaims,
> To stir against the butchers of his life!
> But since correction lieth in those hands
> Which made the fault that we cannot correct,
> Put we our quarrel to the will of heaven;
> Who, when they see the hours ripe on earth,
> Will rain hot vengeance on offenders' heads.
>
> Act I. Sc. 2.

Compare these passages with the blank verse of "A Midsummer-Night's Dream" and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," and see the similarity between them; not, of course, in the thoughts, but in the manner of thought and in the rhythm. Observe, in all, the frequency of the pause at the end of the line; the sense and the rhythm drooping together. These traits and the frequent recurrence of rhymed pas-

sages and of couplets in rhyme at the close of speeches in blank verse, a style of ending sometimes called tag-rhymes, might lead a reader with whom the external and material had more weight than the internal and spiritual to infer that "Richard II." was the earliest in production of all Shakespeare's historical plays, — before even "Richard III.," — as it is of all those which are wholly original. But such traits, although they are of some value as guides in deciding the question of the succession in which Shakespeare's plays were produced, and so as to the order in which they should be read by those who wish to follow the development of his genius, are of an inferior order, and cannot be relied upon. Their evidence is to be accepted as confirmatory or accessory, and should be reckoned as a part only of that which must be taken into consideration. For it could not be relied upon, even should we set aside all other as of no account. Thus, for example, the tag-rhymes in "Love's Labour's Lost" and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" are very few in comparison with those in "Richard II." and "Richard III.," although the comedies were produced at about the same time as the histories and unquestionably before them. As to the order of production, such passages as the following are of great weight: —

> To please the king I did ; to please myself
> I cannot do it. Yet I know no cause
> Why I should welcome such a guest as grief,
> Save bidding farewell to so sweet a guest
> As my sweet Richard. Yet again, methinks,
> Some unborn sorrow, ripe in fortune's womb,
> Is coming towards me; and my inward soul
> With nothing trembles: at some thing it grieves
> More than with parting from my lord the king.
>
> Act II. Sc. 2

Glad am I that your highness is so arm'd
To bear the tidings of calamity.
Like an unseasonable stormy day,
Which makes the silver rivers drown their shores
As if the world were all dissolved to tears,
So high above his limits swells the rage
Of Bolingbroke, covering your fearful land
With hard bright steel, and hearts harder than steel.
White beards have arm'd their thin and hairless scalps
Against thy majesty; and boys with women's voices
Strive to speak big, and clap their female joints
In stiff unwieldy arms against thy crown.
Thy very beadsmen learn to bend their bows
Of double fatal yew against thy state.
Yea, distaff-women manage rusty bills
Against thy seat. Both young and old rebel,
And all goes worse than I have power to tell.

Act III. Sc. 2.

Compare these with any parts of the four plays that we took up for examination in our previous section, and see in them unmistakable evidence of greater maturity of thought, freer command of language, more skilful construction of verse. There can be no doubt, I think, that they are the product of Shakespeare's mind at its first attainment of free and independent action, while, however, other passages in the same play show that it was yet somewhat restrained in its action by a memory of his predecessors and by the influence of his contemporaries.

It would be well, therefore, to begin acquaintance with Shakespeare's historical plays by reading the mixed play "Richard III." first, then "Richard II.," and then "King John." This, it will be seen, reverses the order of these histories according to the chronology of their events, which would place "King John" first and "Richard III." last of these three, and of all the histories except "Henry VIII.;" which is the order in which they have always been printed. But chronology should be entirely disre-

garded by the student, and even by the general reader of Shakespeare's plays. He took very little thought of it himself; and only the "Henry VI." series and "Richard III." have any connection or relations of interdependence. Indeed, as to historical fact, the histories are in some cases inconsistent with each other; but it is in minor and unessential fact which does not affect the dramatic motive of the play. Such points as this are not to be regarded by the reader of Shakespeare, whether in historical play, tragedy founded upon history, or in comedy. In all alike Shakespeare regarded his facts, *i. e.*, the story, as mere material on which he was to work. He was as indifferent in regard to anachronism as he was in regard to the unities of time and place.

Nothing, however, affecting Shakespeare's mental development or his dramatic art can be inferred from his practice in these respects. The unities of time and place, for example, are preserved in his first two plays, "Love's Labour's Lost" and "The Comedy of Errors," absolutely; in his third, "A Midsummer-Night's Dream," he began that disregard of them which he observed throughout his career, and which culminates in "The Winter's Tale," one of his very latest plays, in which the very semblance of them is so disregarded that it affects to a certain degree even a reader's enjoyment of it. But on the other hand, in "The Tempest," written in the same year, or at least the same twelvemonth, as "The Winter's Tale," the unities of time and place are observed with a strictness which cannot be surpassed.

I do wrong to say that they are observed, which implies purpose on the part of the dramatist; and nothing is clearer to me, the more I read and re-

flect upon his works, than that, after his first three or four years' experience as a poet and a dramatist, he was entirely without even any art-purpose or aim whatever, and used his materials just as they came to his hand, taking no more pains with them than he thought necessary to work them into a play that would please his audience and suit his company; while at the same time, from the necessities of his nature and the impulse that was within him, he wrought out the characters of his personages with the knowledge of a creator of human souls, and in his poetry showed himself the supremest master of human utterance. "The Tempest" conforms to the unities of time and place merely because the story made it convenient for the writer to observe them; "The Winter's Tale" defies them because its story made the observance of them very troublesome, and indeed almost, if not quite, impossible. There has been a great deal of ingenious speculation about Shakespeare's system of dramatic art. It is all unfounded, vague, and worthless. Shakespeare had no system of dramatic art.

In "King John" the true dramatic history first appears. "Henry VI." is rather a chronicle dramatized, and so, almost, is "Richard III.;" while "Richard II.," as I have before remarked, is a tragic dramatic poem founded upon historical events. "King John" presents the events of a whole reign — such as were capable of dramatic treatment — wrought into a dramatic form, but without any true dramatic motive, and with a conclusion which, while it is an impressive close of the action, is not a dramatic catastrophe. We know very little of Shakespeare's real life, and still less of the influence that his experience as a man had upon his utterance as a

poet; but it is to be remarked that his only son Hamnet died, at the age of eleven years, in 1596, and that "King John" was written in that year. It would seem as if the lovely character of Arthur (which is altogether inconsistent with the facts of history) was portrayed, and the touching lament of Constance for his loss written, by Shakespeare, with the shadow of this bereavement upon his soul.

Premising that one at least of the earlier comedies and the earliest tragedy are almost necessarily passed over, it would be well next to take up "King Henry IV." in its two parts, this having been written directly after "King John." In these plays, which, like "King John," are true "histories" as far as the treatment of their main incidents is concerned, and in the poetical parts of which an increased weight of thought and momentum of utterance is observable, with a freedom of versification required, and to a certain degree caused, by the former qualities, Shakespeare introduced for the first time a representation of English social life. It was the social life of his own day; for never was there less the spirit of a literary antiquarian than in William Shakespeare. He was no more antiquarian than prophet. He showed things as they were, or rather as he saw them; thoughtless as to the past, except as it furnished him material for dramatic treatment; careless of the future, because it could give him no such help.

In "Henry IV." we have the highest manifestation of Shakespeare's humor; but not in Falstaff only, whose vast unctuosity of mind as well as body has, to the general eye, unjustly cast his companions into eclipse. Prince Hal himself is no less humorous than Falstaff, while his wit has a dignity and a sarcastic

edge not observable in the fat knight's random and reckless sallies. Falstaff, however, is peerless in a great measure because he is reckless, and because Shakespeare, fully knowing the moral vileness of his creature, had yet, as a dramatist, a perfect intellectual indifference to the character of the personage by whom he effected his dramatic purpose. But besides these principals, the attendants upon their persons and the satellites of their blazing intellects, Pointz, Bardolph, Nym, Pistol, Mrs. Quickly, Justice Shallow, Silence, and the rest, form a group which for its presentation of the humorous side of life has never been equalled in literature. It surpasses even the best of "Don Quixote," as intellectual surpasses practical joking. This history, take it all in all, is the completest, although far from being the highest, exhibition of Shakespeare's varied powers as poet and dramatist. No other play shows his various faculties at the same time in such number and at such a height. The greatest Falstaff is that of the Second Part. He is in every trait the same as he of Part First; but his wit becomes brighter, his humor more delicate, richer in allusion, and more highly charged with fun; his impudence attains proportions truly heroic.

As the Falstaff of Part Second of "Henry IV." is the best, that of "The Merry Wives" is the least admirable of all the three. In this comedy the Falstaff is comparatively feeble, and the laughter provoked by the scenes in which he appears is in a great measure due to practical joking. This deterioration in the fat knight's quality, and in that of the pleasure that he gives, agrees with and supports the tradition that the comedy was written in compliance with the request of Queen Elizabeth, that Falstaff should be

shown in love. It is not reasonable to suppose that the man who conceived Falstaff would, without external and superior suggestion, present him as a lover, or had conceived him as capable of the amorous passion; and his part of this comedy, charming in other respects, has all the air of being produced under constraint. "The Merry Wives" has the distinction and the peculiar interest of being Shakespeare's only comedy of contemporary social life, of which we may be sure that he has given a faithful representation; and to a desire to do this may be attributed a realistic air which pervades the whole play. Indeed, this is Shakespeare's only play in the real school. We owe to Queen Elizabeth's command, if indeed she gave it, the occasion which offered him an opportunity to show that he could surpass all other dramatists in the real no less than he did in the ideal presentation of daily life and of human nature. This comedy, as we have it in the folio and in subsequent collected editions of the plays, is not as Shakespeare first wrote it. His first sketch, which has come down to us, although imperfectly, shows unmistakable marks of haste in its composition. It was greatly improved in the revision.

"The Merry Wives" leads our reader back to Shakespeare's early comedies of social life, of which, although he has read all of them once, he is supposed to have thus far studied only one, "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," its author's first attempt in this department of the drama. How rapidly Shakespeare's power developed, both as dramatist and poet, could not be more clearly apprehended than by the comparison of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" with his next comedy of its kind, "The Merchant of

Venice." At most only four or five years — and there is some reason to believe even less — elapsed between the composition of the former and that of the latter play. The former is, for Shakespeare, very weak; faulty in construction, crude in characterization, and, although it contains some charming passages which give promise of the coming man, — notably Julia's third speech in Act II. Sc. 7, — tame in its poetry. But it is to be observed that, although this is one of his earliest plays, his peculiar mastery of blank verse, in which the dialogue seems perfectly easy, and as natural as Monsieur Jourdain's prose, while its rhythm is as marked as that of a minuet, is shown, although with intervals, from the first scene to the last. Observe it in Valentine's and Proteus's first speeches; and in the following passage, in which the "unstopped" lines and the occurrence in nine of three with double endings show us that we should not trust too much to such tokens as a test of the date of composition: —

Ant. Why, what of him?
Panth. He wondered that your lordship
Would suffer him to spend his youth at home,
While other men, of slender reputation,
Put forth their sons to seek preferment out:
Some to the wars to try their fortune there;
Some to discover islands far away;
Some to the studious universities.
For any or for all these exercises
He said that Proteus, your son, was meet.

Act I. Sc. 3.

This comedy has been pronounced careless in its composition. I cannot so regard it; rather it seems to me labored and constrained. The reasons given are chiefly that Valentine is sent to Milan by sea, and that Verona twice occurs in the text where plainly Milan is required. But so did Shakespeare give Bohemia a seacoast in "The Winter's Tale," a play written in

his maturity. About geography Shakespeare seems to have known little and cared less. And why should it have been otherwise? As it was, he knew more than was known to ninety-nine in a hundred of his audience. As to the writing twice of Verona instead of Milan, it seems plainly a mere case of heterophemy.

Careless or labored, however, "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" stands low in the list of Shakespeare's works, and he seems to have risen almost at a bound into the period when he produced the poetry of "The Merchant of Venice," of "Richard II.," and of "Romeo and Juliet," which were written at about the same time. No more instructive study of Shakespeare could be undertaken than the comparison of "The Merchant of Venice" with "The Two Gentlemen of Verona." The differences most to be noted are in characterization and, as to poetry, sustained power. As to the former, compare Antonio with Valentine or Sir Thurio, Portia with Silvia, Nerissa with Lucetta, and see how much more clearly outlined are the former than the latter; how much more vital their fibre; how much more brain they have behind their eyes. Then look in vain in the earlier play for any figure with which to compare the fierce, fawning, crafty, eager, bloodthirsty Shylock. "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" is a love-play, pure and simple (for the friendly devotion of the two gentlemen, a common incident in the romances of Shakespeare's day, is plainly introduced merely for the purpose of the complications that it brings about); and yet compare any or all of it with Scene 2 of Act V., or with the whole fifth act of "The Merchant of Venice." The superior charm of the latter, the greater warmth and earnestness of its passion, must

be at once apparent to the most superficial reader. But the author's advance is shown perhaps more than in any other point in the boldness and freedom with which he handles his material, and in the skill shown in the dramatic construction of his play. In humor the difference is not so greatly in favor of the later work. Launce and his dog are little, if at all, inferior to Launcelot Gobbo. In both this play and its predecessor there is a pair of friends; but beware of being led by that fact into the assumption that they are companion plays, having friendship for their central idea, and illustrating it by the opposite conduct of Proteus and Antonio. Shakespeare did not write plays with central ideas; and in all such incidents as those referred to he merely followed the course or the indications of the stories upon which he worked, as will appear in a very marked manner in the next play that we shall examine.

About the period of his life when "The Merchant of Venice" was produced Shakespeare's attention seems to have been chiefly given to Italian literature, then the first and almost the only national literature in the world, and the school and the storehouse of writers of other races. An Italian story of a pair of hapless lovers, which had been repeated in a long and tedious English ballad version, was taken by him as the plot and almost as the substance of his first tragedy. "Romeo and Juliet" was written very soon after "The Merchant of Venice;" within a year or a year and a half of it. It is in its spirit and sentiment the most youthful of all Shakespeare's plays, not to say of his tragedies. "Love's Labour 's Lost," his first play, is much older in its cast of thought, and although a comedy, much graver and more sententious

in style than this tragedy. This appearance of greater youthfulness of feeling in his poetry is the result of a greater experience of life. It is a sign that the poet had grown a few years older. There is no gravity so grave, no sententiousness so sententious, no wisdom so didactic, as that of an intelligent young man whose twenty-one or twenty-two years weigh heavily upon his consciousness. About ten years afterward he begins to find out that he and life and the world are young. And so it was that at thirty-two Shakespeare gave the world in a tragedy, the freshest, sweetest breath of life's springtime that ever was uttered by a poet's lips. It is at least probable, however, that the play as we have it in the folio bears the marks of a revision of an earlier composition. The numerous rhymes and the occurrence of very young and extremely fanciful poetry — such, for example, as Juliet's passage containing the request that Romeo should be cut up into little stars (Act III. Sc. 2) — favor this inference.

Very many wise and subtle theories as to Shakespeare's purpose in this play have been set forth by critics who engage in the task of approfounding him. They have discovered that he wished to show in Romeo the ephemeral quality of one kind of love and the enduring quality of the other, and how the latter drives out the former; that the play was intended as a companion to "Troilus and Cressida," and that the faithful Juliet is presented as an instructive contrast to the faithless Cressida; and that the moral which the tragedy was written to enforce is, according to one view, the deference due to the wishes of parents; according to the others, the punishment which is sure to fall upon those who cherish family hatred. Ingenious and pretty, but vain fancies. All the inci-

dents in the play Shakespeare found in the dreary old ballad, the course of events in which he merely adopted without change other than their adornment with the splendor of his thought. The Romeo of the old ballad loves and changes his love just as the Romeo of the tragedy does; Juliet is faithful there just as Cressida is faithless in Chaucer's poem, to which Shakespeare went for his "Troilus and Cressida;" and from the old story in the ballad, and not from Shakespeare's mind, came any lesson of the duty of filial deference; for there Juliet gives herself to the enemy of her family just as she does in the tragedy, and comes to the same end. Shakespeare merely dramatized the old ballad to make a play to please his audience, just as any hack playwright might to-day, who was engaged by a manager to do a like task. It merely happened that he was William Shakespeare, and had a peculiar way of doing such things. As to a moral, plainly nothing was further from Shakespeare's thought. The tragedy is hardly tragic, but rather a dramatic love-poem with a sad ending. There are few young men, and fewer young women, with a touch of sentiment, who do not lay down the tragedy after a first reading with the feeling that it would have been sweet to die like Romeo or like Juliet. Not so do we, young or old, read "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "Lear," "Othello."

To the second period of Shakespeare's dramatic life belong his most charming comedies, "Much Ado About Nothing," "Twelfth Night," and "As You Like It," which, with "The Merchant of Venice," are much better suited to representation than his later dramas which are ranged under this title. They may well be read in this order directly after "Romeo and Juliet;"

and although they are comedies and that is a tragedy, it will be found that they are more thoughtful, more solid, and graver. Shakespeare's growing mastery of his art may be justly estimated by the comparison of two personages in "Much Ado About Nothing," Benedick and Beatrice, with two of the same sort, having mentally and morally great likeness to them, Birone and Rosaline, in "Love's Labour 's Lost." The plays are separated in their production by about nine years. Benedick and Beatrice are known the whole world over as types of character, and their speeches are familiar to our ears and upon our lips. Birone and Rosaline are known only to students of Shakespeare, and they have contributed little or nothing to the world's common stock of pregnant phrases.

The student who proposes to enter upon the well-worked field of Shakespearean criticism, or to become his editor, might have his attention directed to certain minute traits of Shakespeare's versification in this second period. But to one who only seeks to enjoy Shakespeare's poetry and his dramatic creations, and to follow the development of his powers, this would be dry, almost arithmetical, and quite unprofitable work. Nor can these traits of mere external form be relied upon with reasonable confidence. Their value as criterions depends in a great measure upon the theory of probabilities and of chances; and this, although it is a safe guide as to the action of mankind, cannot be trusted as regards the action of one man. For in the latter case there enter into the problem the indeterminable quantities of will, preference, deliberate intention, passing freak, and unconscious mood. We may establish a formula by which we may determine with reasonable certainty how many letters will be

dropped into a certain post-office without addresses, or unsealed, during a year; but we cannot in the same way determine how many in like condition any one man has dropped in, or will drop in, during the same time; for we can never be acquainted with all the circumstances and impulses which influence his action. Metrical tests, of whatever kind, have a value in the establishment of the order of production of a poet's works; but they are secondary and accessory, and must be considered only in connection with all other evidence, external and internal.

Merely adding that "King Henry V." may be read now, or, if the student pleases, immediately after the Second Part of "King Henry IV.," I shall pass to the consideration of the plays of the third period.

III. PLAYS OF THE THIRD PERIOD.

Probably no play of Shakespeare's, probably no other play or poem of a high degree of merit, is so much neglected as "Troilus and Cressida" is. I have met intelligent readers of Shakespeare, who thought themselves unusually well acquainted with his writings, and who were so, who understood him and delighted in him, but who yet had never read "Troilus and Cressida." They had, in one way and another, got the notion that it is a very inferior play, and not worth reading, or at least not to be read until after they were tired of all the others, — a time which had not yet come. There seems to be a slur cast upon this play, the reason of which is its very undramatic character, and the consequent non-appearance of its name in theatrical records. No one has heard of any actor's or actress's appearance, even in the last century, as one of the personages in "Troilus and Cres-

sida." Its name has not been upon the play-bills for generations, though even "Love's Labour 's Lost" has once in a while been performed. Hence it is almost unknown, except to thorough Shakespearean readers, who are very few; fewer now, in proportion to the largely increased leisurely and instructed classes, than they were two hundred years ago, much to the shame of our vaunted popular education and diffusion of knowledge. And yet this neglected drama is one of its author's great works; in one respect his greatest. "Troilus and Cressida" is Shakespeare's wisest play in the way of worldly wisdom. It is filled chock full of sententious and in most cases slightly satirical revelations of human nature, uttered with a felicity of phrase and an impressiveness of metaphor that make each one seem like a beam of light shot into the recesses of man's heart. Such are these: —

In the reproof of chance
Lies the true proof of men.
Act I. Sc. 3.

The wound of peace is surety,
Surety secure: but modest doubt is call'd
The beacon of the wise.
Act II. Sc. 2.

What is aught, but as 't is valued?
Act II. Sc. 2.

'T is mad idolatry
To make the service greater than the god.
Act II. Sc. 2.

A stirring dwarf we do allowance give
Before a sleeping giant.
Act II. Sc. 3.

'T is certain greatness once fall'n out with fortune
Must fall out with men too: what the declined is
He shall as soon read in the eyes of others
As feel in his own fall: for men, like butterflies,
Show not their mealy wings but to the summer;
And not a man, for being simply man,
Hath any honour. Act III. Sc. 3.

Besides passages like these, there are others of which the wisdom is inextricably interwoven with the occasion. One would think that the wealth of such a mine would be daily passing from mouth to mouth as the current coin of speech; and yet of all Shakespeare's acknowledged plays, there are only two, "The Comedy of Errors" and "The Winter's Tale," which do not furnish more to our store of familiar quotations than this play does, rich though it is with Shakespeare's ripest thought and most splendid utterance.

The undramatic character of "Troilus and Cressida," which has been already mentioned, appears in its structure, its personages, and its purpose. We are little interested in the fate of its personages, not merely because we know what is to become of them, for that we know in almost any play which has an historical subject; but the play is constructed upon such a slight plot that it really has neither dramatic motive nor dramatic movement. The loves of Troilus and Cressida are of a kind which are interesting only to the persons directly involved in them; Achilles's sulking is of even less interest; and the death of Hector affects us only like a newspaper announcement of the death of some distinguished person, so little is he really involved in the action of the drama. There is also a singular lack of that peculiar characteristic of Shakespeare's dramatic style, the distinction and discrimination of the individual traits, mental and moral, of the various personages. Ulysses is the real hero of the play, the chief, or at least the great, purpose of which is the utterance of the Ulyssean view of life; and in this play Shakespeare is Ulysses, or Ulysses Shakespeare. In all his other plays Shakespeare — because of the vividness of his imagination, and be-

cause he was putting into a dramatic form old tales and plays in which the characters of his personages were already outlined — so lost his personal consciousness in the individuality of his own creations that they think and feel as well as act like real men and women other than their creator, so that we cannot truly say of the thoughts and feelings which they express that Shakespeare says thus or so; for it is not Shakespeare who speaks, but they with his lips. But in Ulysses, Shakespeare, acting upon a mere hint, filling up a mere traditionary outline, drew a man of mature years, of wide observation, of profoundest cogitative power; one who knew all the weakness and all the wiles of human nature, and who yet remained with blood unbittered and soul unsoured, — a man who saw through all shams and fathomed all motives, and who yet was not scornful of his kind, not misanthropic, hardly cynical except in passing moods. And what other man could this be than Shakespeare himself? What had he to do when he had passed forty years but to utter his own thoughts when he would find words for the lips of Ulysses? And thus it is that "Troilus and Cressida" is Shakespeare's wisest play. If we would know what Shakespeare thought of men and their motives after he reached maturity, we have but to read this drama. Drama it is, but with what other character who shall say? For, like the world's pageant, it is neither tragedy nor comedy, but a tragi-comic history, in which the intrigues of amorous men and light-o'-loves and the brokerage of panders are involved with the deliberations of sages and the strife and the death of heroes.

The thoughtful reader will observe that Ulysses pervades the serious parts of the play, which is all

Ulyssean in its thought and language. And this is the reason, or rather the fact, of the play's lack of distinctive characterization. For Ulysses cannot speak all the time that he is on the stage; and therefore the other personages, such as may, speak Ulyssean, with, of course, such personal allusion and peculiar trick or difference as a dramatist of Shakespeare's skill could not leave them without. For example, no two men could be more unlike in character than Achilles and Ulysses; and yet the former, having asked the latter what he is reading, he, uttering his own thought, says as follows, with the subsequent reply: —

Ulyss. A strange fellow here
Writes me: "That man, how dearly ever parted,[1]
How much in having, or without or in,
Cannot make boast to have that which he hath,
Nor feels not what he owes but by reflection,
As when his virtues shining upon others
Heat them, and they retort that heat again
To the first giver."
Achil. This is not strange, Ulysses.
The beauty that is borne here in the face
The bearer knows not, but commends itself
To others' eyes; nor doth the eye itself,
That most pure spirit of sense, behold itself,
Not going from itself; but eye to eye oppos'd,
Salutes each other with each other's form,
For speculation turns not to itself
Till it hath travell'd and is mirror'd there
Where it may see itself. This is not strange at all.
Act III. Sc. 3.

Now these speeches are made of the same metal and coined in the same mint; and they both of them have the image and superscription of William Shakespeare. No words or thoughts could be more unsuited to that bold, rude, bloody egoist, "the broad Achilles," than the subtle, finely penetrative reply he makes to

[1] *I. e.*, gifted, endowed with parts.

Ulysses; but here Shakespeare was merely using the Greek champion as a lay figure to utter his own thoughts, which are perfectly in character with the son of Autolycus. Ulysses thus flows over upon the whole serious part of the play. Agamemnon, Nestor, Æneas, and the rest all talk alike, and all like Ulysses. That Ulysses speaks for Shakespeare will, I think, be doubted by no reader who has reached the second reading of this play by the way which I have pointed out to him. And why, indeed, should Ulysses not speak for Shakespeare, or how could it be other than that he should? The man who had written "Hamlet," "King Lear," "Othello," and "Macbeth," if he wished to find Ulysses, had only to turn his mind's eye inward; and thus we have in this drama Shakespeare's only piece of introspective work.

But there is another personage who gives character to this drama, and who is of a very different sort. Thersites sits with Caliban high among Shakespeare's minor triumphs. He was brought in to please the mob. He is the Fool of the piece, fulfilling the functions of Touchstone, and Launce, and Launcelot, and Costard in other plays. As the gravediggers were brought into "Hamlet" for the sake of the groundlings, so Thersites came into "Troilus and Cressida." As if that he might leave no form of human utterance ungilded by his genius, Shakespeare in Thersites has given us the apotheosis of blackguardism and billingsgate. Thersites is only a railing rascal. Some low types of animals are mere bellies with no brain. Thersites is merely mouth; but this mouth has just enough coarse brain above it to know a wise man and a fool. And the railings of this deformed slave are splendid. Thersites is almost

as good as Falstaff. He is of course a far lower organization intellectually, and somewhat lower, perhaps, morally. He is coarser in every way; his humor, such as he has, is of the grossest kind; but still his blackguardism is the ideal of vituperation. He is far better than Apemantus in "Timon of Athens," for there is no hypocrisy in him, no egoism, and, comfortable trait in such a personage, no pretence of gentility. For good downright "sass" in its most splendid and aggressive form, there is in literature nothing equal to the speeches of Thersites.

"Troilus and Cressida" is also remarkable for its wide range of style; because of which it is a play of great interest to the student of Shakespeare, who here adapted his style to the character of the matter in hand. The lighter parts remind us of his earlier manner; the graver are altogether in his later. He did this unconsciously, or almost unconsciously, we may be sure. None the less, however, is the play therefore valuable in a critical point of view, but rather the more so. It is a standing and an undeniable warning to us not to lean too much upon any one special trait of style in estimating the time in Shakespeare's life at which a play was produced. Moreover, it illustrates the natural course of style development, showing that it is not only gradual, but not by regular degrees; that is, that a writer does not pass at one period absolutely from one style to another, dropping his previous manner and taking on another, but that he will at one time unconsciously recur to his former manner or manners, and at a late period show traces of his early manner. Strata of his old fashion thrust themselves up through the newer formation. "Troilus and Cressida" is so re-

markable in this respect that the chief of the absolute-period critics, the Rev. Mr. Fleay, has been obliged to invent a most extraordinary theory to account for it. His view is that there are three plots interwoven, each of which is distinct in manner of treatment, and, moreover, that each of these was composed at a different time from the other two. He would have us believe that the parts embodying the Troilus and Cressida story were written not only in Shakespeare's earliest manner, but in his earliest period, those concerning Hector in his middle period, and the Ajax parts in the last. That these three stories were interwoven is manifest; but they came naturally together in this Greek historical play, — for it is that, — and their interweaving was hardly to have been avoided; the manner of each is not distinct from that of the other, although there is, with likeness, a noticeable unlikeness. But the notion that therefore Shakespeare first wrote the Troilus and Cressida part as a play, and then years afterward added the Hector part, and again years afterward the Ajax and Ulysses part, seems to me only a monstrous contrivance of an honest and able man in desperate straits to make his theory square with fact. As to detail upon this subject, I shall only make one point. Tag-rhymes, or rhymed couplets ending a scene or a speech in blank verse or in prose, are regarded by the metre-critics (and within reason justly) as marks of an early date of composition. Now in "Troilus and Cressida" these abound. It contains more of them than any other play, except one or two of the very earliest. The important point, however, is that these rhymes appear no less in the Ulysses and Ajax scenes of the play than in the others, — a sufficient

warning against putting absolute trust in such evidence.

Among those few of Shakespeare's plays which are least often read is "All's Weil that Ends Well." This one, however, is to the earnest student one of the most interesting of the thirty-seven which bear his name; not only because it contains some of his best and most thoughtful work, but because, being Shakespeare's all through, it is written in two distinct styles, — styles so distinct that there can be no doubt that as it has come down to us it is the product of two distinct periods of his dramatic life, and those the most distant, the first and the last. Its singularity in this respect gives it a peculiar value to the student of Shakespeare's style and of his mental development. There is not an interweaving of styles, as in "Troilus and Cressida;" the two are distinctly separable, and there is external historical evidence which supports the internal.

We have a record in Francis Meres's "Palladis Tamia" of a play by Shakespeare called "Love's Labour's Won;" and there is no reasonable doubt that that was the first name of "All's Well that Ends Well." As the "Palladis Tamia" was published in 1598, this play was produced before that year, and all the evidence, internal and external, goes to show that Shakespeare wrote it soon after "Love's Labour's Lost," and as a counterpart to that comedy. The difference of its style in various parts had been remarked upon in general terms; but I believe that this difference was first specially indicated in the following passage, which I cannot do better here than to quote from the introduction to my edition of the play published in 1857; and I do so with the greater freedom

because the particular traits which it discriminated have since been insisted upon by the Rev. Mr. Fleay, in his very useful and suggestive, but not altogether to be trusted, "Shakespeare Manual,"[1] to which I have before referred.

"It is to be observed that passages of rhymed couplets, in which the thought is somewhat constrained and its expression limited by the form of the verse, are scattered freely through the play, and that these are found side by side with passages of blank verse, in which the thought, on the contrary, so entirely dominates the form, and overloads and weighs it down, as to produce the impression that the poet, in writing them, was almost regardless of the graces of his art, and merely sought an expression of his ideas in the most compressed and elliptical form. The former trait is characteristic of his youthful style; the latter marks a certain period of his maturer years. Contracted words, which Shakespeare used more freely in his later than in his earlier works, abound; and in some passages words are used in an esoteric sense, which is distinctive of the poet's style about the time when 'Measure for Measure' was produced. Note, for instance, the use of 'succeed' in 'owe and succeed thy weakness,' in Act II. Sc. 4 of that play, and in 'succeed thy father in manners,' Act I. Sc. 1 of this. It is to be observed also that the advice given by the Countess to Bertram when he leaves Rousillon is so like that of Polonius to Laertes in a similar situation that either the latter is an expansion of the former, or the former a reminiscence of the latter; and as the

[1] Published in 1876. The author has also been led to the same conclusions in regard to the text of *The Taming of the Shrew*, which I set forth in detail in 1857.

passage is written in the later style, the second supposition appears the more probable. Finally, it is worthy of remark that both the French officers who figure in this play as First Lord and Second Lord are somewhat strangely named *Dumain*, and that in 'Love's Labour's Lost' Dumain is also the name of that one of the three attendants and brothers in love of the King who has a post in the army; which, when taken in connection with other circumstances, is at least a hint of some relation between the two plays."

If the reader who has gone thoughtfully through the plays in the course which I have indicated will take up this one, he will find in the very first scene evidence and illustration of these views. It is almost entirely in prose, which itself shows the weight of Shakespeare's mature hand. The first blank verse is the speech of the Countess, in which she gives a mother's counsel to Bertram as he is setting out for the wars, as is pointed out above, and which is unmistakably of the "Hamlet" period. Then comes a speech by Helen beginning, —

> O were that all! I think not on my father:
> And these great tears grace his remembrance more
> Than those I shed for him,
>
> Act I. Sc. 1.

and ending with this charming passage, referring to the growth of her love for Bertram: —

> 'T was pretty, though a plague,
> To see him every hour; to sit and draw
> His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,
> In our heart's table; heart too capable
> Of every line and trick of his sweet favour:
> But now he 's gone, and my idolatrous fancy
> Must sanctify his reliques. Who comes here?
>
> Act I. Sc. 1.

It is needless to say to the advanced student of

Shakespeare's style that this is in his later manner. A little further on is Helen's speech to the detestable Parolles, beginning with the mutilated line, "Not my virginity yet," which is followed by some ten, in which she pours out in Euphuistic phrase her love for Bertram, saying that he has in her "a mother, and a mistress, and a friend, a counsellor, a traitress, and a dear;" and yet further, —

> His humble ambition, proud humility,
> His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet,
> His faith, his sweet disaster, with a world
> Of pretty, fond, adoptious christendoms
> That blinking Cupid gossips.
>
> Act I. Sc. 1.

This will remind the reader of Scott's Euphuist, Sir Piercie Shafton, who, if I remember aright, uses some of these very phrases, in which Shakespeare has beaten Lilly at his own weapons, and made his affected phraseology the vehicle of the touching utterance of real feeling. "Euphues" was published in 1580, when Shakespeare was only sixteen years old; and this passage, although it may have been written or perhaps altered later, was probably a part of the play as it was first produced. The scene ends with the following speech by Helen, which, for its peculiar characteristics, is worth quoting entire. The reader who will compare it with "Love's Labour's Lost" and "A Midsummer-Night's Dream" will have not a moment's doubt as to the time when it was written: —

> Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie
> Which we ascribe to heaven: the fated sky
> Gives us free scope, only doth backward pull
> Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.
> What power is it which mounts my love so high,
> That makes me see and cannot feed mine eye?
> The mightiest space in fortune nature brings
> To join like likes and kiss like native things.

> Impossible be strange attempts to those
> That weigh their pains in sense and do suppose
> What hath been cannot be: whoever strove
> To show her merit that did miss her love?
> The king's disease — my project may deceive me,
> But my intents are fix'd and will not leave me.
>
> Act I. Sc. 1.

Besides its formal construction and its rhyme, this passage is overmuch afflicted with youngness of thought to be accepted as the product of any other than Shakespeare's very earliest period. Of like quality to this are other passages scattered through the play. For example, the Countess's speech, Act I. Sc. 3, beginning, "Even so it was with me;" all the latter part of Act II. Sc. 1, from Helen's speech, "What I can do," etc., to the end, seventy lines; passages in the third scene of this act, which the reader cannot now fail at once to detect for himself: Helen's letter, Act III. Sc. 4, and Parolles's, Act IV. Sc. 3; and various passages in the last act. Shakespeare, I have no doubt, wrote this play at first nearly all in rhyme in the earliest years of his dramatic life, and afterward, late in his career, possibly on two occasions, re-wrote it and gave it a new name; using prose, to save time and labor, in those passages the elevation of which did not require poetical treatment, and in those which were suited to such treatment giving us true although not highly finished specimens of his grand style.

The thoughtful reader who, having followed the course previously marked out, comes to the study of "Hamlet," "King Lear," and "Othello" needs me no longer as a guide, but is prepared to apprehend them justly, not only in their own greatness, but in their relative position as the product of their author's mind in its perfected and disciplined maturity, — as the splendid triple crown of Shakespeare's genius.

No other dramatist, no other poet, has given the world anything that can for a moment be taken into consideration as equal to these tragedies; and Shakespeare himself left us nothing equal to any one of them, taken as a whole and in detail. The Roman plays, "Coriolanus," "Julius Cæsar," and "Antony and Cleopatra," particularly the last, should now receive his careful attention. In "The Winter's Tale," "The Tempest," and "Henry VIII." he will find the very last productions of Shakespeare's pen, and in the first and the third of these he will find marks of hasty work both in the versification and in the construction; but the touch of the master is unmistakable quite through them all, and "The Tempest" is one of the most perfect of his works in all respects. No true lover of Shakespeare should neglect the "Sonnets," although many do neglect them. They are inferior to the plays; but only to the best parts of them.

As to helps to the understanding of Shakespeare, those who can understand him at all need none except a good critical edition. And by a good critical edition I mean only one which gives a good text, with notes where they are needed upon obscure constructions, obsolete words or phrases, manners and customs, and the like. Of the plays in the Clarendon Press selected series,[1] better editions cannot be had, particularly for readers inexperienced in verbal criticism. Those who find any difficulty which the notes to those editions do not explain may be pretty sure that, with the exception of a very few passages the corruption of which is admitted on all hands, the trouble is not with Shakespeare or the editor. Shake-

[1] Including, I believe, *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Richard II.*, *Henry V.*, *Richard III.*, *Coriolanus*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*.

speare read in the way which I have indicated, and with the help of such an edition, has a high educating value, and in particular will give the reader an insight into the English language, if not a mastery of it, that is worth a course of all the text-books of grammar and rhetoric that have been written ten times over.

Of criticism of what has been called the higher kind, I recommend the reading of very little, or better, none at all. Read Shakespeare; seek aid to understand his language, if that be in any way obscure to you; but that once comprehended, apprehension of his purpose and meaning will come untold to those who can attain it in any way. In my own edition I avoided as much as possible the introduction of æsthetic criticism, not because of its difficulty, for it is easy and alluring work; on the contrary, I availed myself of it when it was necessary as an aid to the settlement of the text, or of like questions; and by its use I venture to think that I succeeded in establishing some points of importance. But in my judgment the duty of an editor is performed when he puts the reader, as nearly as possible, in the same position for the apprehension of his author's meaning that he would have occupied if he had been contemporary with him and had received from him a correct copy of his writings. More than this seems to me to verge upon impertinence.

Upon this point I find myself supported by William Aldis Wright,[1] who is in my judgment the ablest of all the living editors of Shakespeare; who brings to his task a union of scholarship, critical judgment, and

[1] Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and one of the editors of the Cambridge edition.

common sense which is very rare in any department of literature, and particularly in Shakespearean criticism; and whose labors in this department of letters are small and light in comparison with the graver studies in which he is constantly engaged. He, in the preface to his edition of "King Lear" in the Clarendon Press series, says, "It has been objected to the editions of Shakespeare's plays in the Clarendon Press series that the notes are too exclusively of a verbal character, and that they do not deal with æsthetic, or, as it is called, the higher criticism. So far as I have had to do with them, I frankly confess that æsthetic notes have been deliberately and intentionally omitted, because one main object in these editions is to induce those for whom they are especially designed to read and study Shakespeare himself, and not to become familiar with opinions about him. Perhaps, too, it is because I cannot help experiencing a certain feeling of resentment when I read such notes that I am unwilling to intrude upon others what I should regard myself as impertinent. They are in reality too personal and objective, and turn the commentator into a showman. With such sign-post criticism I have no sympathy. Nor do I wish to add to the awful amazement which must possess the soul of Shakespeare when he knows of the manner in which his works have been tabulated and classified and labelled with a purpose, after the most approved method, like modern *tendenzschriften*. Such criticism applied to Shakespeare is nothing less than gross anachronism."

Not a little of the Shakespearean criticism of this kind that exists is the mere result of an effort to say something fine about what needs no such gilding, no such prism-play of light to enhance or to bring out its

beauties. I will not except from these remarks much of what Coleridge himself has written about Shakespeare. But the German critics whom he emulated are worse than he is. Avoid them. The German pretence that Germans have taught us folk of English blood and speech to understand Shakespeare is the most absurd and arrogant that could be set up. Shakespeare owes them nothing; and we have received from them little more than some maundering mystification and much ponderous platitude. Like the western diver, they go down deeper and stay down longer than other critics, but like him too they come up muddier. Above all of them, avoid Ulrici and Gervinus. The first is a mad mystic, the second a very literary Dogberry, endeavoring to comprehend *all* vagrom men, and bestowing his tediousness upon the world with a generosity that surpasses that of his prototype. Both of them thrust themselves and their "fanned and winnowed opinions" upon him in such an obtrusive way that, if he could come upon the earth again and take his pen in his hand, I would not willingly be in the shoes of either. He would hand them down to posterity the laughing-stock of men forever.

Not Shakespeare only has suffered from this sort of criticism. The great musicians fare ill at their hands. One of them, Schlüter, writing of Mozart, says of his E flat, G minor, C (Jupiter) symphonies, —

> It is evident that these three magnificent works — produced consecutively and at short intervals — are the embodiment of *one* train of thought pursued with increasing ardor; so that taken as a whole they form a grand *trilogy*. . . . These three grandest of Mozart's symphonies (the first lyrical, the second tragic-pathetic, and the third of ethical import) correspond to his three greatest operas, "Figaro," "Don Giovanni," and "Die Zauberflöte."

Now, I venture to say that there is no such consec-

utive train of thought, and no such correspondence. Ethical import in the Jupiter and in the "Zauberflöte," and correspondence between them! Mozart did not evolve musical camels out of his moral consciousness. But a German professor of *Esthetik* is not happy until he has discovered a trilogy and an inner life. Those found, he goes off with ponderous serenity into the *Ewigkeit*.

I have been asked, apropos of these articles, to give some advice as to the formation of Shakespeare clubs. The best thing that can be done about that matter is to let it alone entirely. According to my observation, Shakespeare clubs do not afford their members any opportunities of study or even of enjoyment of his works which are not attainable otherwise. And how should they do so, except by the formation of libraries for the use of their members? In this respect they may be of some use, but not of much. Few books, a very few, are necessary for the intelligent and earnest student of Shakespeare, and those almost every such student can obtain for himself. As I have said, a good critical edition is all that is required; and whoever desires to wander into the wilderness of Shakespearean commentary will find in the public libraries ample opportunities of doing so. I have observed that those who read Shakespeare most and understand him best do not use even critical editions, except for occasional reference, but take the text by itself, pure and simple. An edition with a good text, brief introductions to each play, giving only ascertained facts, and a few notes, glossological and historical, at the foot of the page, is still a desideratum.[1] Quiet read-

[1] Since the first publication of these studies an attempt has been made to supply this need, in the *Riverside Shakespeare*.

ing with such an edition as this at hand will do more good than all the Shakespeare clubs ever established have done. I have seen something of such associations, and I have observed in them a tendency on the one hand to a feeble and fussy literary antiquarianism, and on the other to conviviality; a thing not bad in itself, and indeed, within bounds, much better than the other, but which has as little to do as that has (and it could not have less) with an intelligent study of Shakespeare, although upon after reflection it may assist in the sympathetic apprehension of Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek. There is hardly anything less admirable to a reasonable creature than the assemblage at stated times of a number of semi-literary people to potter over Shakespeare and display before each other their second-hand enthusiasm about "the bard of Avon," as they generally delight to call him. Now, a true lover of Shakespeare never calls him the bard of Avon, or a bard of anything; and he reads him o' nights and ponders over him o' days while he is walking, or smoking, or at night again while he is waking in his bed. If he cannot afford to buy a copy offhand, he saves up his pennies till he can get one, and he does not trouble himself about the commentators or the mulberry-tree. He would not give twopence to sit in a chair made of it: for he knows that he could not tell it from any other chair, and that it would not help him to understand or to enjoy one line in "Hamlet," or "Lear," or "Othello," or "As You Like It," or "The Tempest."

These remarks have no reference, of course, to such societies as the Shakespeare Societies of London, past and present. They are associations of scholars for the purpose of original investigations, which they print

for the use of their subscribers, and for the republication of valuable and scarce books and papers having a bearing upon Shakespeare and the literary history of his time. We have no such material in this country. Whoever wishes to go profoundly into the study of Shakespearean, or rather of Elizabethan, literature would do well to obtain a set of the old Shakespeare Society's publications, and to become a subscriber to the other Shakespeare Society, which is doing good thorough work. Clubs might well be formed for the obtaining of these books and others, for the use of their members who cannot afford or who do not care to buy them for their own individual property; although a book really owned is, I cannot say exactly why, worth more to a reader than one belonging to some one else. But all other Shakespeare clubs are mere vanity. The true Shakespeare lover is a club unto himself.

THE LADY GRUACH'S HUSBAND.

SOME years ago, before monitors or even iron-clad ships were thought of, the gigantic man-of-war Pennsylvania lay at the Washington Navy Yard, soon to become as useless in war as a giant, and to seem almost as fabulous. Much had been expected of her; and her colossal size and her enormous battery of one hundred and twenty heavy guns were looked upon with pride by all "true Americans." It was determined that the President of the United States, accompanied by the members of his Cabinet, the principal officers of the Army and Navy, and other persons of like official distinction, should visit her for an "inaugural" entertainment, and that in honor of the occasion he and they should be saluted by the discharge of all her guns. The gentlemen were accompanied by a large number of ladies; and a party more numerous and representative was probably never gathered on the decks of a national vessel. The salute began, and the discharge of the heavy ordnance, rapid, regular, and continuous, produced a remarkable effect on the civilian visitors. Very soon the men were stunned or worried, and showed strong symptoms of nervous anxiety. The women, on the contrary, to the surprise of all, showed no fear, but rather delight, and were cheerfully excited, not concealing an inclination to laugh at and crow over the nervous weakness of their masculine

companions. The firing went on, and became a protracted and apparently endless series of tremendous explosions. For the discharge of one hundred and twenty guns at intervals of only three seconds occupies eight minutes (counting one second for the fire); and eight minutes, measured by four-second counts, even in silence, seem as if they would never end. But when, as in this case, each period is marked by a roar that stuns the ears, and a concussion that shakes the heavens and the earth and fills the air with flame and smoke, the performance becomes oppressive and tries nervous endurance to the utmost. And on this occasion a striking natural phenomenon, full of moral significance, was presented to the curious student of human nature. It was observed that, as gun followed gun, the men, who were so disturbed at first, became quiet, self-possessed, indifferent, and at last cheerful; while the women, who at first were so filled with life and gayety, soon showed signs of weariness, then of nervous excitement, and finally of terror, looking forward with dread to the inevitable and regularly recurring shock: so that before the salute was over most of them were in a state of extreme distress, some were hysterical, and some had fainted. Their nerves could bound with elasticity at a single fillip, but succumbed under repeated blows; while the masculine nature toughened under resistance to the protracted strain.

This modern instance helps us to understand the story of a woman whose life and actions, with those of a man whose name would have been unknown to the world but for his connection with her, fill an interesting chapter in the traditional history of Scotland. Her name was Gruach, and she came of a family whose

strong and grasping hands had made them what was then called noble. There is reason for believing that she was very beautiful, and yet more for the assurance that she had in a rare degree those winning ways and womanly wiles that give the weaker half of mankind so much influence for good or evil over the stronger. Unimaginative, without tenderness, with a cruel, remorseless nature and a bright, clear intellect that saw at once the end that she desired and the means of its attainment, she was a type of those female politicians who in the past ages of the world's moral rudeness have sought, and, by intrigue, by suggestion, and by the stimulus of sexual temptation and feminine craft which made the strength of men their instrument, have attained, that great end of woman's ambition, social preëminence. For Gruach was ambitious, — so ambitious that, noble as she was, and called the Lady, she burned, as we are told in old chronicles, with unquenchable desire to bear the name of Queen.

Most women are more ambitious than most men. They find their stimulus to action in the desire and hope of triumph over others; men theirs in the doing of that which, done completely, insures triumph, which they take gladly enough, it is true, as the due and sign of their superiority. Men love power for its own sake and their pleasure in its conscious exercise; and, contented with its real possession, they are often willing that others should remain ignorant whose head and hand they have obeyed. Women, less imaginative, and, outside of love, more practical and material than men, covet power for the visible elevation which it insures to them, and yet more for that which it enables them to give to those they love. For women who have the womanly nature in its best form are more ambi-

tious for those they love than for themselves. They seek and will make great sacrifices for the advancement of their brothers, lovers, husbands, children, and sometimes their sisters; and have been known to rejoice even in the triumphs of their dearest female friends. But where a woman is without tenderness and without the capacity of devotion, and is withal able, crafty, and ambitious, she is the most unscrupulous and remorseless creature under the canopy of heaven. A tigress has not less compunction when she bears a white gasping infant off into the jungle. Of such ambitious sort was Gruach; but like the tigress, whose bright, sleek beauty and sinuous charm seem to have been hers, she also had sexual and maternal instincts, the former stronger and more enduring than the latter. And so she loved, after her kind, and was married to a man whose person pleased her eye, whose spirit and daring roused her sympathy and won her respect, and whose position and whose aspirations were such that she hoped by her union with him to reach the highest round attainable of fortune's ladder.

This man was a cousin of the King of Scotland, and, failing heirs of the royal body, the next claimant of the throne. He was a valiant soldier and a great captain: fearless in combat, and in the field a bold and skilful leader. He too was ambitious, and restless under the constraint of inferior position. He had in a great degree what the Lady Gruach was without, — imagination and reflection. Yet he liked the stir and bustle of an active life; and although himself of a kindly nature, he fretted at the benign and gentle rule of his royal cousin, whose nobility and strength of character were tempered by meekness, and at last, when our story opens, by the sobering influence of

age. This man had, too, a richer although a less stable moral nature than his wife's; and, unlike her, he was weighted in the race of their ambition with scruples, the heaviest of all clogs on those who make success the end and goal of living.

If a man has but steadfast purpose, and is entirely unscrupulous, he may obtain very great advancement with very moderate ability; and if opportunity and great ability unite in favor of the unscrupulous and persistent man, his road to distinction is so nearly smooth and easy that the obstacles he meets with are only such as furnish him a pleasurable excitement in surmounting or removing them. His chances of success, however, are exactly in proportion to his utter lack of scruple when he is called upon to decide between a bad course, which may lead towards, and a good one, which may lead from, the object of his ambition. Thus, suppose a journalist, for instance, to have attained a desired position by fawning, craft, and intrigue, and by the remorseless use of every means that would rid him of men who would thwart his plans, — a course which is possible to men who are incapable of discussing or even of apprehending a great principle, and who have only that meanest of all forms of intellectual ability, political craft (itself a mere manifestation or outcome of unscrupulousness), — such a man, if the change of circumstances should make a change of party, or of principle, or of faith seem necessary to his success, will sell himself and his pledges and his memories with as little scruple as a butcher sells mutton from the shambles. We might say that he would sell his soul to the devil, if he had a soul worth the devil's buying. But beside such a man how respectable is Faust! And verily he does wisely, and he has

his reward. For in one scale is success, and in the other so many scruples as make that dram of ill called failure; and the object of his life is the former. Now, of this kind was the Lady Gruach; but her husband, tossed by passion and borne on the strong current of unrestrained desire, and being without anchorage to the firm bottom of well-settled principle, yet feared to cut loose from all moral moorings, and showed in his career how difficult and perplexing it is to be both corrupt and scrupulous.

He was of the stirp of Beeth, who called themselves Mac Beeth; but in the chronicles, and in the great tragic story founded on them, his name is compressed into Macbeth. In their marriage the Lady Gruach and her husband were as happy as such a couple could be. They loved each other: their position was exalted, and their means were ample. But she, constantly coveting the crown, and finding him not without ambition, so worked upon him through his fondness for her, and by her steadiness of purpose, that he came to look upon the violent removal of his sovereign Duncan as an act to which he might bring himself; and at last he satisfied his wife by swearing that he would murder the King and usurp the throne on the first opportunity. But for a time no opportunity was offered. At last, however, it came in a manner least expected.

A nobleman named Macdonwald, assisted by the King of Norway and the Thane of Cawdor, headed a revolt against King Duncan; and Macbeth, whose wishes could not have been accomplished by his taking the second place in a rebellion, stood by his royal kinsman, and fought for the throne which it was his interest to protect, that it might be, if not his, at

least his nearest cousin's, — Duncan. In two battles bloodily fought and gallantly won, Macbeth, assisted by another valiant and able captain named Banquo, crushed the revolt so completely that Duncan, hearing of his victory, sent two noblemen immediately with orders for the death of the Thane of Cawdor, and the enduing of Macbeth with the traitor's lost title and dignities.

As Macbeth, before the King's messengers had reached him, was marching homeward, he was met upon a heath by three withered, man-like hags, of the sort that by superstition and cruelty in the young, rude ages of the world were made to believe themselves witches. These hailed him first as Thane of Glamis, which he had recently become by inheritance; next as Thane of Cawdor, of his succession to which dignity he was ignorant; and last as King to be thereafter. They also hailed his companion and fellow-commander as the father of kings. It is possible that these persons were the disguised agents of a faction inimical to Duncan, who, taking advantage of the belief then existing in witchcraft, adopted this course to egg on these successful generals to an expedition against the throne. But it is more probable that some prophecy of a person who fancied herself gifted with second sight was fitted to the story of Macbeth after his career had become a part of the traditions of Scotland.

The verification came so hard on the heels of the seeming prediction as to the thaneship of Cawdor that Macbeth's soul was at once filled with a turbulent conflict of good and evil suggestion as to his attainment of the highest honor promised him; and he immediately thought of his sworn purpose of killing

his royal kinsman. He was so wrapped up in self-communing that he paid no attention to the King's noble messengers, but he then reached no decision except that he would take the crown, come to him as it might; and after starting away from the thought of the murder once or twice, he sought the relief of present quiet in the reflection that, let come what will, we can worry through it with time and opportunity. But although he determined to do nothing, he constantly thought of the violent removal of all living hindrances to his attainment of the throne; for, at his first audience of the King, Duncan declaring his eldest son, Malcolm, heir apparent, with the title of Prince of Cumberland, Macbeth immediately said to himself that this new dignity was a step which he must fall down or else o'erleap. But this man was one of those moral cowards who do not speak their evil purposes, or even give them names to themselves. He would have, as he said, his eye wink at his hand, and yet would have that to be which the eye feared to see when it was done. Thus it was that, in writing a letter to the Lady Gruach, in which he told her of the prediction of the witches, he dropped no hint which even she could understand that he saw the crown nearer than before. And in this letter, written at such a time and under such circumstances, he showed his love for her, and his pleasure that he was able at least to satisfy in part her ambitious cravings.

As Gruach was reading her husband's letter, and revolving in her mind the moral feebleness which years had discovered to her in him, and the means that she must use to goad him on to win her triumph, a messenger entered and reported to her that King

Duncan was coming to her castle that very night. She saw so instantly that here was the opportunity for the King's murder, and decided so instantly that it should be done, that, stirred by the great and unexpected news, in the fierce delight of her soul she almost interrupted the messenger by the exclamation, "Thou 'rt mad to say it!" As she summoned up her spirits to her suddenly imposed task, her husband entered, and she, with no word of endearment or delight to the man that came to her safe from two battles, hailed him by his and her two new titles. Then, in a few words fraught with all the character of the speakers, the die was cast for both of them and for Duncan. He told her that the King was coming there that night, and to her pregnant question, "And when goes hence?" he, not only knowing well what she meant, but also remembering what he had before sworn to her to do, answered, "To-morrow — as he purposes." This he did, wishing at the time that Duncan should not leave the castle alive, and showing this wish in his face. For Macbeth, although a good dissimulator with his tongue, and having a rare gift at making excuses, yet with all his bravery in battle could not, when suddenly startled, control either his nerves or the expression of his countenance. Surprise of soul or sense made him start like a frightened horse; and his face always revealed the emotion that his lips belied. And because of this, Gruach partly pitied and partly despised him; for she, not free of speech, except in chiding and in exhortation, was free from all such nervous weakness, and stood a shock as if her white breast were marble and her cold blue eyes were sapphires.

Without hesitation she set his task clearly before

him and undertook its preparation. She had at once to play the gracious and honored hostess before the King, and to keep her husband up to the point of criminality from which he was ever faltering. And he, in his reflective fashion, as the King supped, slunk away and fell to communing with himself about the murder and its consequences; and after the manner of men who have not the faculty of cutting themselves loose from that which they have passed, he began to go over again in mind considerations which he should have either yielded to or set finally aside before, and which his wife would not have thought of seriously at all. In this mood of moral vacillation she came upon him, then determined to abandon the murderous project; and, to use a phrase that she applied to herself, she so "chastised him with valor of her tongue" that he repented of his repentance, and undertook the assassination. He did not, however, venture to trust himself, or she did not venture to trust him, to decide the moment when he should take the final step; and it was arranged between them that her striking on her bell should be the signal for his entrance of the King's chamber. As he was awaiting this summons in the court, his heated imagination caused his eye to be deceived with an illusion. He thought he saw a dagger floating in the air, with its handle toward his hand, and that it moved before him toward Duncan's chamber, blood breaking out upon it as it went.

He had an easy task. Gruach had made the two body-guards who slept in the King's chamber drunk, and had emboldened herself by wine, so that when she laid their daggers ready for her husband's use she was tempted to take the business off his hands, but that

the old King's face reminded her of her father's, and threw across that dark and awful hour the bright, soft memory of the days when she was without her woman's passions. But she did not yield or flinch a moment. That little gleam of sentiment is the only one that falls upon the figure of this woman, who yet was so sensually attractive that, in spite of her relentless hardness, her husband could hardly speak to her, even in the most terrible moments, without some endearing diminutive, — word caressings to which she made no response.

She waited for him at midnight in the open court, and there he found her as, with his hands all blood, he came from Duncan's chamber. She greeted him with no word of comfort, or sympathy, or even of excitement; and when he looked at his gory hands and spoke of them with horror, she only reproached him with his folly. And then he told her of his emotion while he was doing the murder, and how he heard a voice crying out to those in the castle to sleep no more, for Macbeth was murdering sleep; and he broke out into tender and touching exclamations about the good angel that he had murdered. All this was so strange to Gruach, so foreign to her nature, that not only could she not comprehend it, she could not apprehend it; and she asked him, with wonder, reproach, and pity in her tones, "What do you mean?" But his only reply was to tell her again — for his soul was filled with frightful imaginings — how the voice called on all the house to sleep no more, and proclaimed that he, the murderer of sleep, should sleep no more himself. And yet, even with the stimulus of that dread moment, she could not apprehend his meaning, and asked him, as she might have asked a servant the day before

about a noise in the courtyard, "Who was it that thus cried?" She was so hard of heart, so literal of apprehension. In all their conversation throughout all their lives it was always he who revealed the sight of more in an act or an event than the act or the event itself. Imagination and fancy made his utterance rich with twin-born thoughts, each beautifying and lighting up the other; his stout soldier's heart was ever running over with sentiment and tenderness, — to all of which she never made response. She saw only the material forms, the literal significance, and the hard necessities of things; and to meet the latter she bent all the energy of her sinewy soul. And now, seeing that he had in his confusion brought away the daggers, she ordered him back with them. He refused to look again upon his work, when she, taking the daggers from him, said she would go, — for to her eye the sleeping and the dead were just the same, — and that she feared no painted devil. So absolutely unimpressible and unimaginative was this woman's nature! And yet in the end it was she who, with unclosed but unseeing eyes, expiated most grievously that murder of innocent sleep which her husband heard clamored through the house; and it was she who was haunted by the blood of the murdered Duncan.

The guilty husband and his guiltier wife went to their chamber, whence they were summoned by the arrival of two noblemen, Macduff and Lenox, who waited upon the King at his command. The murder having been discovered by Macduff, Macbeth entered the King's chamber with Lenox, and there, in a seeming frenzy of wrath, drew his sword and slew the two chamberlains, dreading that they should be questioned. While he was absent the Lady entered, and was told

that Duncan had been murdered. With cool perception of the requirement of the situation she exclaimed, "Woe, alas! what, in our house?" and trusted her tongue no further. But when Macbeth came from the scene of his crime, he broke forth into a wordy and fanciful exclamation of grief, very beautifully expressed, but too daintily phrased for a genuine utterance of manly emotion. He mourned that he himself had not died before that hour, and declared that from that time there was nothing in the world worth living for. And so when Macduff asked him why he had killed the chamberlains, he answered with a diffuse and overwrought description of his own emotions and the dreadful spectacle which had so moved him; but his speech had not in it the clear and simple ring of honesty. Gruach saw at once that he had blundered in killing the men, and had thus attracted rather than diverted suspicion; and she saw also that he was overdoing his expression of grief and horror; and therefore instantly diverted attention from him by seeming to faint and by calling for assistance. She succeeded thus in diverting Macduff's mind, and gained time for consultation.

The crime committed, Macbeth, who, when the way before him was clear, was a man of prompt and decided action, immediately claimed the succession, which, as the King's two sons had fled and thus brought some suspicion on themselves, he could do with reason; and went straightway to Scone to be invested with the sovereignty.

Duncan's sons had vaguely suspected foul play on the part of their cousin; but there was one man who suspected it with more reason. This was Banquo, who had heard the tempting prediction of the witches,

and to whom on that occasion, and once afterward, Macbeth had dropped a hint that it would be well for them to consult together at a future time for their common benefit; but the rapid course of events had prevented any communication between them. Banquo, however, on Macbeth's suggestion that if his fellow-general would cleave to him, it should be to his advantage, had assented, with the proviso that he lost no honor by so doing. Macbeth remembered this; and some time having now passed, the presence of his former friend became oppressive to him. For Banquo's was a simple and a loyal soul; and from his eyes looked forth a calm integrity of purpose that fretted Macbeth like a constant, dumb reproach. He could not but remember, too, that the same evil power which had promised him the honors which he now possessed, yet did not quite enjoy, had said that Banquo's issue should sit upon the throne of Scotland, and thus profit by his crime to the exclusion of his own issue. Haunted by this thought, and by the pure and dignified serenity of Banquo's presence, he determined that he should die; and now, having entered upon his career of crime, he needed no stimulus or support from his wife, and took his measures promptly and alone. Nay, proud of his decision, he not only kept it to himself, but when Gruach suggested the same action, he, who before had leaned on her, now did not even tell her that he had been beforehand in this matter, but bade her to remain innocent of the intention until she applauded the deed.

Complimenting Banquo with wordy dissimulation, Macbeth invited him to be present as chief guest at a banquet; and discovering that he would ride forth with his son and return in the twilight, he gave orders

that both should be assassinated. Banquo was slain, although Fleance escaped; and at the banquet the chief assassin entered and informed him that the most important part of his bloody commission had been executed. This report was soon productive of a strange scene in the banquet-hall; for Macbeth, who had descended from his state (for so the canopied royal dais at the head of the hall was called), and had taken a seat at the table among his guests, rose to give a general welcome, which he prefaced with an expression of regret for the absence of Banquo. Then, as he turned to take the seat again, he saw it filled with a figure, invisible to all other — the figure of the murdered Banquo. His excited imagination again tricked his eye; and he was the victim of a spectral illusion. Losing all self-command, he started back and broke out into exclamations of surprise and terror. His wife saw at once the nature of his emotion, and, with supreme tact, she readily assured the company that the King was only suffering from an affection to which he had been subject from his boyhood, and going to him she upbraided him as if he had been a ghost-frightened child. The illusion was dispelled, and the festivities were resumed. Macbeth again rose to drink a cup to the general joy of the whole table, and again, possessed with the idea of Banquo's murder, and as if in the genuine boldness of his nature to front it and to face it down, he openly wished for his victim's presence. His wish was satisfied, as far as he was concerned. The idea in his brain was again pictured on his eye; and Banquo again rose up before him. The guilty man greeted the vision with a shriek, and a conjuration the vivid and terrible earnestness of which was in striking contrast with the fanciful utterance of his assumed

emotion on the discovery of the death of Duncan. But his wife had told him at the previous appearance that what he saw was an illusion like that of the dagger; and with prodigious bravery, and an effort for self-possession that showed a power of will greater than he had ever had occasion to exert on the field of battle, he fronted the vision, and, addressing it as if it were real, approached it step by step until he finally faced it down. His wife, however, saw that his mind was too much shattered to be trusted longer, and dismissed the company with brief decision, but calm and gracious courtesy.

They gone, she did not console him, or show one spark of tenderness for the man whom she had driven into this dreadful strait. She replied briefly to his excited speech, and perceiving the cause of the unsettled condition of his brain, she said to him, "You lack the season of all natures, sleep." It was true. She made no allusion to the cry, proclaiming the end of sleep, that her husband heard sound through the castle as he did his bloody work in Duncan's bedchamber; probably she did not think of it, for she was yet troubled by no such fancies; but Macbeth *had* murdered sleep — her sleep as well as his. And this is the last that we see of her until she appears before us a restless wreck, tossed upon heaving memories, her sleep become a monstrous and perverted mockery of repose, unravelling and rending instead of knitting up her sleeve of care.

Macbeth, profoundly shaken by the vision at the banquet, and sorely disappointed in the escape of Fleance, went the next day to consult the three weird sisters. Their incantations procured him assurance that he was safe until Birnam wood came to Dunsi-

nane, and that he could be harmed by no man of woman born. But here again he saw the bloody form of Banquo, followed by a long line of his descendants wearing crowns and bearing sceptres. Deeply stirred as he was by this vision, he trusted more to the previous assurance as to his impregnable position, and gave himself up to the tyrannical abuse of the power he had usurped. In his course of crime his nature had become perverted; and he whose milk of human kindness and whose pure instincts, at war with his base ambition, had provoked the scorn of the unscrupulous Gruach, abandoned himself to gross excesses of oppression, of debauchery, and of blood. The land groaned under the rule of him who before he became its ruler wished, or fancied that he wished, to attain even his ambitious ends by holy means. He grew old, and his soul became haggard with crime even more than his body with years. His friends fell from him, and he held his throne only by a sway of terror. Duncan's sons and Macduff, whose castle he had surprised, and whose wife, children, and retainers he had put to death, now by the aid of England made head against him, and he shut himself up in his castle of Dunsinane, secure there until the forest of Birnam came to besiege him, and laughing at all his woman-born enemies.

But while her husband thus rioted, with hardening soul, in tyranny and sensual enjoyment, the Lady Gruach (for so she was still called even more than by the name of Queen which she had so coveted) broke down under the protracted consciousness of crime. She found out at last what he had meant when he imagined that he had murdered sleep. Her nights became, even more than her days, an ever-recurring

agony of distracting memories and nervous horror. A disbeliever in spectres, she herself became a living ghost, and haunted the castle through the night, walking through its darkened rooms and dismal passages a crazed somnambulist. Of this her husband knew nothing; for now their lives were separate. But still, wicked as he was, and wicked as he knew her to be, there lingered in his bad heart more than a memory of his early love. For real love of man for woman and of woman for man is not given because of good, or, God be thanked therefor, withdrawn because of evil. Yet even in this disturbed condition of a strong soul fretted away to feebleness, but not changed in nature, Gruach showed no tenderness. She did not repent; she did not soften; she was not excited to an exaggerated, or even to a natural appreciation of her crime. Her speech during her sleep-walking was terrible merely from its vivid memories. It was curt, hard, unyielding, as it had been before. She was oppressed by the memory of the blood spot on her hand, her little white hand. In her former literal fashion, she wondered that an old man should have so much blood in him, thinking only of the bare physical fact; while her husband had thought, as he looked on his hands,—of so monstrous a crime did their condition seem to him the sign, — that they would redden all the waters of all the oceans. But the smell of the blood offended the dainty nostrils of her whose soul, oppressed by crime, was yet impenetrable to the sense of sin; and she vanishes from our sight with sighs and groans that move us to horror and to pity, but not to sympathy.

Birnam wood did come to Dunsinane, borne thither as a concealment of the numbers of the assailants, who

were led by a man not naturally born of woman; and while it was approaching, but before it had been seen, Gruach's soul became too weak to hold its place within her body, and she died. Her husband, to whom life now could bring no joy, and worse, no sorrow, hearing the cry of women in her chamber, was little disturbed by it. He who before, with all his stoutness, had been so promptly apprehensive of terror, was now no longer a man of quick and fine emotion; and she who had once told him that his starting would spoil all, could she have been present now would have seen him, in the supreme hour of his peril, hear unstartled the death-cry from the room of the woman he had loved so well. His senses had become dull, his soul hard and callous. But his martial spirit was unbroken, and when he was told that the wood was moving, he roused himself, and although he alternated between defiance and a weariness of life that made the very sunlight seem oppressive, he summoned those who would follow, and then this brave, good-natured, loving, but selfish, weak-souled, and unprincipled man went out to meet the death that he had earned by his yielding to his wife's instigation.

"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The excuse served the Lady Gruach's husband no better than it did him who yielded to the first temptress.

THE CASE OF HAMLET THE YOUNGER.

In the traditionary history of Denmark the story is told of a nobleman who lived at some time after the successful invasions of England by the Danes, and who, being an able and a valiant man, attained distinction, according to the standard of those times, by feats of arms on sea and land which nowadays would be called piracy and robbery. He and his younger brother were made, or made themselves, co-governors of the province of Jutland — that part of Denmark that lies nearest Norway. The fame of this nobleman — the elder — became so great, and his prowess and his enterprise made him so feared by the rulers of neighboring countries, that the King of Norway, being the most disturbed and desiring to bring matters to an issue, desperately challenged him to single combat; the conditions of which were that a part of Norway corresponding in importance to the province of Jutland should be set up as a stake against the latter, and that both should be the prize of the survivor. The challenge was accepted; and in this combat the King of Norway was slain, the lands which he had staked on the issue becoming thereupon a part of the realm of Denmark.

The King of the latter country (who was called with proud distinction, The Dane, as being the first and foremost of his nation), seeing the martial and politi-

cal importance of this nobleman, and seeking to bind him firmly to his interests and to forestall any ambitious projects which he might form, gave him his daughter in marriage; and on the death of the father, the successful adventurer, in virtue of his connection with Geruth or Gertrude, for so the princess was called, and by reason of his being foremost in martial prowess and all kingly qualities, claimed and received the throne of Denmark. For royal dynasties were not established among the Scandinavians in those times, and regular family succession was not settled. The crown was elective; but unless there was some cogent reason to the contrary, the election was likely to fall upon the son or some other near kinsman of a deceased monarch — a point of much importance in the sequel of this story. After his elevation the new King seemed to fulfil all the hopes which his previous conduct had awakened. He was beloved of his courtiers and his nobles; and by no person did he seem to be held in higher estimation than by his wife, through whom, in a great measure, he attained the throne, and whose fondness for her splendid lord and master was exhibited so openly as to be the subject of general remark. No king could have fairer prospects of a long and happy reign, or of leaving with greater assurance of certainty his sceptre and kingdom to his son and heir. For Gertrude had brought him a son, who was called after him Amleth, Hamblet, or Hamlet, a lad of high promise, but whose life came, through grief, disappointment, turmoil, and disaster, to a tragical ending, partly through the villany of his father's brother Claudius and the wantonness of his mother, and partly through a defect of his own nature.

For this uncle, moved to envy at the success of his

brother, to whom he was much inferior in all points of mind and soul and body that go to the making of a noble man, and moved, too, by one of the meanest of all passions, ambition, which seeks not goodness and greatness with the desire to be good and great, but strives for superiority to others, set his bad heart upon the attainment of his brother's throne; and as his first step toward the accomplishment of his purpose, he sought to win the affections of his brother's wife, she who was both by birth and marriage the most royal person, excepting her own son, in all Denmark. Her he found a willing prey, and also a ready help in his design. Notwithstanding her seeming fondness for the King, she transferred her fickle love to her brother-in-law; and after living for a while with him in adultery unsuspected by the King, she consented to, or at least winked at, her husband's murder by her paramour, who at once took his brother's place upon the throne, and like his brother confirmed his seat by a marriage with her, which took place within a few weeks of the death of her husband.

At this time Hamlet was a student at college, or at school, the name then given to the highest institutions of learning and philosophy. His exact age is not known; but it could not have been more than twenty years. For we are told that the new King was looking forward with apprehension to the time when his nephew should come to man's estate; he is spoken of as the young Adonis of the North, and his affection is called a violet in the youth of primy nature; and all the many references to his age at this time show that he was on the threshold of early manhood. Chief among his friends and companions at the university was a young gentleman of no estate, but of

a noble soul and of a simple, strong, and steadfast nature, named Horatio; who seems to have been somewhat older as well as more staid than himself. Two others, very much his inferiors, named Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, were also his companions. Even at college the young Hamlet, with an innate disposition to criticise all things, seems to have studied the characters of those around him; and he had preferred Horatio, not with the spontaneous liking common to youth, but because he had discovered in him certain admirable qualities — fortitude, good faith, firmness of will, and a calm serenity of disposition. Hamlet was intellectually fascinated by a character which he appreciated none the less, but rather the more, because it was the opposite to his own; while Horatio was pleased with the affability, the princely courtesy, the high discourse, far-reaching thought, and subtle insight of Hamlet.

The death of Hamlet's father brought the youthful prince from the university to Elsinore, the capital of Denmark; whither he went filled with two conflicting thoughts, grief for his father and expectation of succeeding him on the throne. For one of Hamlet's passions was that form of ambition which consists in a love of dignified position and power, without the enterprise and the hardiness of nature which enable a man to win these for himself. He loved to be gracious and courteous to those around him; and he desired to stand upon the elevation coming from which his grace and courtesy might be highly prized. But he had not the steady self-assertion and the daring which were necessary to the thrusting of another down who stood in his place, however wrongfully. This partly because of his youth and his studious habits, but partly also

because of his mental constitution. He arrived at court barely in time for his father's funeral, and found his uncle already in possession of the throne with the consent and hearty support of all his father's nobles and courtiers, and even of his father's widow. His mother, whom he expected to see plunged in an overwhelming sorrow, surprised and disgusted him by an unconcealed fondness for his uncle, and offended him no less by the willing consent which she gave to the extinction of his own present hopes of the succession. The swift marriage of his mother to his uncle rounded and perfected this outrage by its complete disregard of his father's memory, and by the stability it gave to his uncle's position on a throne which Hamlet had looked upon as his own almost certain inheritance. For in him, through his mother as well as his father, centred all the royalty in Denmark.

Thus sorely smitten in his two tenderest points, he went about the court moodily, making a show of his anger and his grief; saying little, doing nothing, fretting and sneering, but not forming any designs for the vindication of his father's memory or the attainment of his own ambition. For his was one of those natures into which wrong enters like a thorn to wound and rankle, not as a spur to rouse endeavor. In this he was very unlike young Fortinbras, the son of the King of Norway slain by Hamlet's father; who, although a delicate and gentle prince for those rough days, being yet full of spirit and promptitude of soul, seized this moment when the court of Denmark was in a disturbed condition, over which Hamlet was musing and fretting, to set on foot a warlike enterprise for the recovery of the territory which had been lost to Norway by his father's violent death. The

threatened war and the moody discontent of Hamlet cast a gloom upon the court, and darkened the royal honeymoon with serious alarm.

Hamlet was soon followed to Elsinore by his friend Horatio, who arrived there, if not in time for the late King's funeral, at least for the new King's marriage of the royal widow Gertrude. Soon after his arrival, and before he had found an opportunity of seeing his friend the Prince, who, absorbed in his melancholy reveries, seems not to have known or at least to have noticed the presence of his school-fellow, Horatio was told by two soldiers of his acquaintance, gentlemen, but of no rank, of a strange appearance which they had twice seen as they kept watch on a platform of the castle. A ghostly figure had passed and repassed them near the hour of midnight. Clothed in complete steel, it moved silently before them; and from the lifted beaver looked out the sad face of the dead King of Denmark. At the request of one of them the doubting Horatio joined them on their watch, that he might see the apparition. It came; passed solemnly before the watchers, but neither spoke nor made a sign when it was spoken to, and disappeared at the sound of the midnight cock-crowing. Deeming such a visitation portentous, Horatio determined to inform young Hamlet of it; for he was sure that the ghost, although dumb to others, would speak to him. The next day he found the Prince alone in the hall of state. The new King had held a formal audience that day, had despatched ambassadors to Norway to check the project of young Fortinbras, and had endeavored, with the Queen's aid, to rouse Hamlet from the moodiness which so troubled the guilty mind of the murderer and usurper. To win the Prince to acquiescence in

the new state of affairs, he had assured him of his succession, and had begged him to remain at the court as the first of subjects, the King's chief counsellor and heir. He need not have feared any untoward consequences from Hamlet's lonely cogitations. For the Prince had already, in spite of his grief and his anger, and the disturbed state of affairs which gave him opportunities of avenging his father's death and acquiring the crown he so much desired, and which at least made it becoming that he, the first subject in the kingdom, should be present at the capital, determined, in weak despair and dejection of soul, to return to the university. Suspecting him and fearing to trust him out of sight, the King, with the Queen's help, dissuaded him from this puerile purpose.

The audience being ended, the court withdrew ; and Hamlet, left alone, fell, as his wont was, into reverie ; and his thoughts were not of the means by which he could obtain what he thought his right, — the throne, — but of his mother's sin against sentiment, and of his own disgust, and of his weariness of life. He was ignorant thus far of the adultery and the murder ; yet he fed the bitterness of his soul by thinking that he longed to commit suicide. To this mood he was brought not only by his mother's conduct and his own disappointment, but by his constant neglect of the active duties of his position, and his habit of watching and pondering the conduct of all around him. Hence came his soul's tedium and his fanciful dallying with the thought of a self-sought death. His weariness of life came of too much observation and reflection ; for it is sadly true that they enjoy life most who know and think the least about it.

In this mood Horatio found the Prince, and greeting

frankly and heartily, although respectfully, the close friend who had parted from him hardly a month before, he was surprised to be received, although with perfect courtesy, yet not with instant and complete recognition. This was the result of no hauteur or affectation on the part of Hamlet, but of an inability, common to natures like his, to break off their musings, and, except upon great occasions, bring their faculties suddenly to bear upon what is newly placed before them. Hamlet welcomed Horatio, and then fell into his accustomed jeering. For, as to his mental tone and habit in his daily conversation, he was chiefly a cynic and a humorist. His irony was fine and cutting, but his humor was often broad. Himself an accomplished and elegant gentleman for his time, a thoughtful man, and of good impulses, he walked through life looking about him with a fine scorn of all that was inferior to himself; and to this he gave utterance in polished jeers and bitter ridicule. It was only when he was alone, or with some trusted friend like Horatio, or favorite humble follower like a certain player whom he admired, that he gave serious utterance to his sad philosophy. And this was rarely; for he loved and admired few men well enough to talk with them earnestly and admit them to real acquaintance with his soul.

Hamlet was much disturbed by Horatio's story, and determined himself to watch that night for the apparition. It came; he recognized it instantly as his father's ghost, and following it alone to a retired place, there learned from it that his father had been murdered by his uncle, and that his mother had forsaken her husband, even during his life, for her brother-in-law. Shocked by this revelation, and roused

by the exhortations of his father's spirit, Hamlet, on the impulse of the moment, which with him was always equally strong and evanescent, devoted himself solemnly to the fulfilment of the ghost's command. He declared in his heart that he would give up his contemplative, inactive life, and wipe out of his memory all saws, that is, all the sententious maxims that he had formed and cherished there. Whereupon the formation of this resolution reminding him of his cherished habit, and causing him to think how valuable and pleasant these saws were, he at the next moment took out his note-book and wrote down the maxim, that a man might smile and be a villain. Then when his companions joined him he immediately began to jest; and although he was then sure that what the ghost said was true, as sure as he ever became afterward, and that according to the moral notions of that time, as well as in compliance with the ghost's injunction, he should slay his uncle at his first opportunity, he, now seeing that the usurper had reason to hate and fear him, and being willing to shelter himself from the monarch's malice, and hoping also to divert attention from himself while he thought about thinking what design he ought to form for the avenging of his father, resolved to feign madness. Then he made Horatio and the others swear to keep the vision and this resolution secret. And instead of rejoicing, he cursed himself that he was born to such a duty.

Now, there was in the court of Denmark, in a position like that of chamberlain, an old nobleman named Polonius; a politician, crafty, prudent, full of worldly wisdom, and withal a very accomplished gentleman, but pompous in manner, in thought somewhat oversubtle, and in speech too wordy. He had a son,

Laertes, a young man of good heart and high spirit, and a daughter, Ophelia, a fond, amorous, sweet, and gentle girl, but weak-souled, easily led, and easily rebuffed. Thrown into Hamlet's company, his comeliness and courtesy won her to love him after her feeble fashion; and he, first allowing himself to be loved, came at last to love her in return, and even to talk to her of marriage. Polonius sent Laertes to Paris, and, fearing that Hamlet did not wish to make Ophelia his wife, commanded her to break off her intercourse with him; which she did without much pain or remonstrance. This gave Hamlet a good opportunity to begin impressively the play of his feigned madness; and some time after the appearance of the ghost, we know not how long, but long enough for Laertes to have become in need of money at Paris, and to have formed new friends and new habits, the Prince startled poor Ophelia by coming before her in a slovenly dress — he who was usually a dainty man in his apparel — and by wild and melancholy actions; after which he left her, sighing deeply, but not speaking. She told this to her father, who, immediately inferring that the Prince was mad for his daughter's love, spread the report about the palace.

The King, however, ever apprehensive through conscious guilt, came to fear that Hamlet's apparent madness had another cause; and after it had continued some time longer, he sent to the university for the Prince's friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to perform the double office of diverting him and being spies upon his conduct. They came; and time enough had elapsed ere their arrival for the accomplishment of the purpose of the embassy to Norway; the ambassadors and the young noblemen reaching Elsinore at the

same time. On the day that both had audience, Polonius, that he might show the King that Hamlet was mad because Ophelia had repelled his love, proposed that a meeting should be contrived between the two, at which himself and Claudius should be hidden observers. The King consented, not believing that Hamlet was love-crazed, but hoping to get at the truth by the help of this new spy. Polonius, left alone and seeing Hamlet coming, sought an encounter of wits with him, in which he was badly worsted. For the Prince indulged his cynical humor to the utmost, and, under cover of his feigned madness, mocked and jeered the old chamberlain to his face, with a rudeness and cruelty which, had not his pretended condition apparently voided his conduct of malicious purpose, would have been brutal. When the old man retired, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern came in, and Hamlet fell to jesting with them, and finally into the utterance of his scornful, misanthropic musings. And he told them, as he told many others on various occasions, that he had sunk into melancholy. Indeed, he accused himself of insanity to divers persons until almost the day of his death; a sure evidence, if they had but known it, that he was not mad; and indeed so weak was his resolve that he confessed with particularity to Guildenstern and Rosencrantz, as well as to Horatio and to his mother, that he was feigning madness for a purpose. He was too unstable and incontinent of soul even to keep his own great secret, but went about making others swear that they would keep it for him.

While he and his college friends were talking, a company of players arrived at the palace; and the Hamlet who had just avowed that the earth and the heavens held neither beauty nor joy for him had the

new-come ministers of pleasure immediately before him, and began to speak, and to criticise and quote, finally causing the principal player to recite part of a scene. He treated his old favorites in the princely way that sat on him so well, and showed the kindly good nature which was one trait of his character by forbidding the chief actor to mock Polonius. He would sneer at the old counsellor himself, under cover of his feigned madness; for that took away the appearance of design, which is the life of insult; but he would subject him to no coarser treatment at the hands of his inferiors. With a project half formed, he asked the player if he could, and would, study a speech which he should write, and, of course, did not ask in vain.

When the player left his presence, Hamlet fell again to thinking about what he should have done and had left undone; and because his intellect was ever brighter and higher than his moral nature, he saw himself in his own mind's eye a weakling that he despised. The player, in reciting his speech, had assumed the passion of the part with such fervor and seeming reality that his words pierced Hamlet's heart like an unseen dagger, and he reproached himself bitterly that he had done nothing to avenge his father and right himself. And so, feeling that he deserved that self-reproach, because he was sure that his uncle had killed his father, whose death was yet unavenged, he immediately and with much earnestness called upon his brain to furnish him with some device by which he could be made sure that his father had been killed by his uncle; and thereupon he fell back upon his half-formed resolution to have the play of a murder represented before the court at Elsinore, subtly suggesting to himself that perhaps the ghost was a devil, and that he ought to

have better grounds for revenge than such an apparition.

Meantime he continued to muse upon the emptiness of life, its rooted wrongs and endless evils; and he thought, not how to do what he had sworn to his father's spirit, but whether it would not be better to turn his dagger against himself, and thus escape the duty set before him; and then, ever forethinking although never forecasting, he saw that death, although it would relieve him of his present perplexity, would leave him he knew not where; and he decided not to die until he had thought somewhat longer over the possible advantages of dying.

One day while he was musing in this fashion, the King and Polonius watching in concealment, Ophelia appeared. She had not seen him for many a day, and had long desired to find an opportunity of returning him his letters and his gifts, according to her father's orders. Hamlet at first spoke her fair, and in forgetfulness that he was mad; but soon remembering his cue (it being suggested by her presence and her mention of his love tokens), and seeking a vent for his cynical humor and his bitterness of soul, he mocked and flouted this poor girl, denying his love for her, and satirizing her sex in her person: telling her that he was mad, and that the folly and wantonness of women had made him so, bidding her go to a nunnery lest she should become the mother of such a poor thing as a man, and declaring that there should be no more marriages in Denmark. His conduct on this occasion was so hard and cruel, and so far from any semblance of madness, that some of those who have studied his case have concluded that he must have discovered that the King and Polonius were overhearing him. But

there is no warrant for such an opinion, which indeed is suggested only as a support to the indefensible assumption that Hamlet being good at heart, his conduct must have been always thoroughly estimable and consistent; whereas there are no graver offences or grosser errors than those into which kind-hearted men fall from lack of resolution. This, poor Hamlet saw himself; for, as he was talking with his friend Horatio, whom he loved and trusted more than any other person in the world, he told him that he had chosen him because of his resolute firmness and serenity of soul: and he declared that of all men those were blessed who were so constituted that they could not be made the sport of fortune, and that the man whom he took to his inmost heart must be one who, like Horatio, was not the prey of his own emotions.

The play was performed, and accomplished all that Hamlet expected of it; that is, it assured him of what he knew perfectly well before — that his uncle had killed his father. The King fled from the representation of the murder; the performance stopped; and the court rose and went out in confusion. Hamlet burst forth into exclamations, and began to talk with Horatio about the event, when he suddenly broke off with a light jest and called for music. Then Rosencrantz and Guildenstern came to him with a message from his mother bidding him come to her chamber. He received them with ironical compliment, and at once began to jest and to jeer, telling them in earnest, however (that is, with purpose), that they should believe of him two things: first, that he was mad (a sure sign that he was sane), and next, that his grief was that he had been disappointed of the throne. True, he had the King's word for the succession; but he

said, "While the grass grows the steed starves." The musicians whom he had called for, entering then with their pipes, found that he had already changed his purpose; he wanted no music; but the sight of the instruments suggested to him a mode of showing his former friends that he saw through their design. He asked them to play upon the recorder, and they being obliged to refuse because they had not the skill, he burst out upon them in anger, telling them that he saw they were trying to play upon him, and that they would find him harder to play upon than a pipe. Polonius then coming in, Hamlet tried how far his complaisance would lead him to acquiesce in any folly the Prince might utter; and finding that it knew no bounds, he inferred that the general belief in his madness was well established.

Left alone by Polonius, he immediately began to assure himself how very terribly he felt; communing with himself, as he always did, in a very high style and with a vivid imagination. He thought at this time that he could drink hot blood and do some act so terrible as to affright the face of nature; but he did nothing but muse and talk after his old fashion. For on his way to his mother's chamber he passed the King's oratory, and there saw him alone, exposed and praying. The thought at once occurred to him that here was his opportunity. But hardly had he half drawn his sword when he thought of a good reason for putting off the execution of his purpose. It was that if he killed the King at prayer he would send him to heaven, and so not punish but reward him; and that to rightly avenge his father he should kill his murderer at some time when dying he would go straight to hell! — a revelation of a fiendish malignity

of purpose, if it revealed any purpose whatever. But it revealed none. On the contrary, it merely showed Hamlet's lack of purpose. He pretended to deceive himself with this argument, when all that he really wished was to shuffle away from, and procrastinate, what he felt to be his solemn duty.

When Hamlet reached his mother's chamber, Polonius had hidden himself behind the hangings to give the Queen the moral support of the consciousness of his presence. But the Prince being very violent in his manner, as was now his way with women (for the effect of his rankling wrong showed itself in this perversion of his nature), she cried out for help, and Polonius answering, Hamlet on the instant whipped out his sword, and, with his customary jeer upon his lips, killed the old courtier on the spot; thinking at the time it was the King, and rejoicing that he had slain him on a momentary impulse, and had thus relieved himself of the intolerable irksomeness of keeping himself up to the sustained purpose of executing a fixed resolution.

The son rated the mother roundly for her sin, and still more roundly for her bad taste in leaving so handsome and gallant a man as his father for such an ugly, vulgar fellow as his uncle. While he was thus thinking of his father, and excited by the recital of his mother's conduct, he became the victim of an optical delusion — such a one as troubled Macbeth, a Scottish usurper who saw again and again the figure of a man named Banquo, whom he had caused to be slain. While Hamlet was speaking to his mother about the father whose ghost he and Horatio and Bernardo and Marcellus had seen upon the platform, he thought he saw the ghost enter the chamber,

and thought he heard him speak and chide him that he had let so long a time pass by while he was vexing his soul with thoughts of his wrong and his suffering, and dulling the edge of his purpose. But it was not the ghost. For the ghost was visible to every eye, and this that Hamlet saw was invisible to his mother. The ghost wore armor; but Hamlet saw his father "in his night gown." That was not what we call now a night shirt; for until a very late period people wore no night dress, but lay in bed quite naked. A night gown was until comparatively late years what we call now a dressing gown, or *robe de chambre;* and Hamlet, in his mother's chamber, merely fancied that he saw his father dressed as he had often seen him there in his lifetime. When he was about to part from his mother, he entreated her to refrain herself from his uncle's bed that night; but he seemed to desire this in a great measure lest the King should wheedle her into a confession of the fact that her son was only craftily feigning madness. And in the consideration of Hamlet's case nothing should be kept more clearly in mind than that from the time we hear of him until his death he was perfectly sane, and a man of very clear and quick intellectual perceptions and strong sound judgment, — one perfectly responsible for his every act and every word; that is, as responsible as a man can be who is constitutionally irresolute, purposeless, and procrastinating. They have done him wrong who have called him undecided. His penetration was like light; his decision like the Fates'; he merely left undone.

The Queen kept Hamlet's counsel better than he kept it himself, and reported to the King that he was

as mad as the raging elements. But the King seeing, like Polonius, a method in his madness, and determining that in any case it would be better that he should be put out of the way, sent him to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, with sealed letters, pretended as a demand for tribute, but really asking that the Prince should be put to death immediately.

As Hamlet went to the port whence he was to embark, he met a troop of soldiers marching. They were Norwegian forces, led by young Fortinbras, the son of the man whom Hamlet's father slew. He was, like Hamlet, the heir to his father's and his uncle's throne, and the counterproof of Hamlet in this story. They were going to fight for a little patch of ground not worth the cost of the expedition; and yet the Polacks in possession were prepared for a desperate resistance. When they had passed by, Hamlet sent his companions forward, and began, after his fashion, to muse upon his own motives; and he discovered and confessed to himself that his habit of thinking and thinking, instead of thinking and doing, had made him to all intents and purposes a coward. And he mercilessly scourged himself, in thought, that he had not slain his uncle and seized the Danish throne; for which he had cause, and will and strength and means. For it must be remembered that Hamlet never doubted for a moment that it was his duty to avenge his father's death by his uncle's. Upbraiding himself thus, he declared that from the time of receiving this lesson his thought should be only to do justice on his father's murderer. Poor moral weakling! his thought and his intent were just as they ever had been, the straws of every gust of accident. Being suspicious of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as

the instruments of his uncle on the voyage to England, he purloined their letters, opened and read them, and promptly wrote one ordering them to be put to death, sealed it with his father's seal which he carried with him, and putting this in place of the other, sent them to the fate to which they knew they were taking him. By this little trick he saved his life, and rid himself of two double-faced companions whose fate cannot be mourned. His action here was prompt, but it hardly deserved the name of action. It was the instant fruit of one of those impulses upon which irresolute men sometimes act, without thought and without purpose, and which are little more significant of high mental or strong moral constitution than the snap of an alligator's jaws or the spring of a serpent.

An encounter with pirates ended in such a way that Hamlet returned to Denmark while his companions went on to their graves in England. During his absence Ophelia had become insane and had drowned herself unwittingly; and Laertes, having returned from France, had attempted a rebellion in revenge for his father's death at the hands of one of the royal family. Him the King, being informed of Hamlet's unexpected appearance at Elsinore, had induced to undertake the death of his father's murderer; the plan being that in a fencing match before the court between Hamlet and Laertes, the latter should wound the former with a poisoned and unbated foil. That Hamlet would accept the challenge there appeared to be no doubt. For he was strong of body, a skilful swordsman, and was vain of his accomplishment: so much so indeed that, in the midst of all his trouble about his father's death and his mother's marriage, the praises of Laertes' fencing, brought from Paris by

a French gentleman, so excited his envy that he constantly expressed his desire that Ophelia's brother might return that he might challenge him; and he, the sworn avenger of his father, he who had a kingdom at stake, kept himself well in practice for a bout with foils.

Coming to Elsinore after the discovery that the murderer of his father and the seducer of his mother had also treacherously sought his life, he met Horatio, and strolled with him into a churchyard, and there began musing upon life and death, and fell into bantering with a clown whom he found digging a grave. Seeing a funeral of some state approach, in which the King and Queen and the court appeared, he retired with Horatio and watched the rites. But it was not until Laertes came forward as chief mourner and spoke of his sister, that Hamlet suspected that he saw the burial of Ophelia. Then, with a sudden and tremendous revulsion of feeling, he broke forth into passionate exclamations of love and grief; and then, too, at that strange, unfitting time, he claimed his royal rank, and announced himself as The Dane. The sudden turmoil in his unstable soul caused him to pour out this turbid mingling of passionate grief and disappointed, weakly self-asserting ambition. Laertes sprang at his throat with the fierce, sharp cry, "The Devil take thy soul!" Hamlet faced him fiercely, for he was no coward, and now was roused to frenzy; but in his very reply, meant to be a threat, he went into a brief egoistic explanation of his own character and motives. The foes were separated, and Hamlet left the churchyard.

The challenge to the fencing match was sent by a fop whose exquisiteness appeared no less in his speech

than in his clothes and his conduct; and Hamlet, having now yet another grief laid upon the burden of his soul, amused himself with caricaturing his speech to his face, probing him with irony, and making him go through his little paces, unsuspicious of the exhibition he was making. The challenge was accepted; and not only was Hamlet wounded with the poisoned foil, but by a change of swords Laertes also; and the Queen, who was present, was poisoned by drinking from a goblet prepared for her son, to make his death the surer. Then Hamlet, learning this from Laertes, on the impulse of the moment, with no thought of his long-deferred purpose, and no reference to his father's fate and his mother's crime, but in momentary resentment of that immediate treachery, rushed upon the King and with his last strength slew him. Cut off thus in the early prime of his manhood — for by this time he had come to be thirty years old — he yet felt, even in the agonies of an envenomed death, that this was the only possible solution of his perplexity, and that to see life fade away was happiness. For seeing Horatio seize the poisoned goblet to drink the dregs that he might be with his friend in death, he tore it away from him, and begging him to live and vindicate his honor, he said in the words put upon his gasping lips by him who sent him forth, with just yet tender hand, a warning to all after ages: —

> If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicity awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
> To tell my story.

That story [1] I have now told — how lamely and inadequately no one can know better than myself; but as

[1] A criticism by a distinguished writer makes it proper that I should say that this essay was published in April, 1870.

here presented it may help those who can read it as I do to apprehend the lesson that it teaches: that a man may have kindliness, and grace, and accomplishment, high thoughts and good impulses, and even a will that can stand firmly up against attack (as it were, leaning against opposition), and yet if he have not strong, urgent, exclusive desire, which compels him to put his impulses and will into action, and seek one single object, if indeed he be not ballasted with principle and impelled by purpose, he will be blown about by every flaw of fortune, and be sucked down into the quicksand of irresolution: — that it is better, with Fortinbras, to make mouths at an invisible event, than, with Hamlet, to be ever peering enviously into the invisible future: — that, in the words of the wicked King, which gave the key of Shakespeare's meaning,

> That we would do,
> We should do when we would; for this "would" changes
> And hath abatements and delays as many
> As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
> And then this "should" is like a spendthrift sigh,
> That hurts by easing.

They may understand, too, how difficult it is for an actor to embody a personage who is of a high mental and moral type, and yet whose characteristic trait is a negative quality; — so difficult, that to present such personage satisfactorily demands a genius almost corresponding (I do not say equal) to his by whom it was created.

In the controversies over the rival Hamlets of the stage, how comes it that critics do not notice one strong and obvious argument against adopting a blonde *chevelure* — the fact that Hamlet's father had black hair? The elder Hamlet's beard was, says Horatio,

"as I have seen it in his life — a sable silvered." Now, the presumption at least is surely against a black-haired father having a yellow-haired son. On the other hand, how is it that the champions of a robust Hamlet do not make anything of the abundant proofs given in the tragedy that he was meant to be a man of fine physique and bodily strength? If anything ought to be beyond controversy in the play, this ought to be. Hamlet is always spoken of as athletic and vigorous. He and all others describe his father as the very perfection of manly strength and grace. Hamlet flings off Horatio and Marcellus with ease when they endeavor to hold him back from following the ghost. He is taken prisoner by the pirates because he first and alone succeeds in boarding their ship. He is described by the King as such an adept in horsemanship and fencing, and so proud of his accomplishments, that he always burns to cope in skill and strength with any one who is famed for his mastery of such manly exercises. He flings off Laertes in the struggle over the grave. In the fatal fencing scene he is able to tear from the hand of Laertes the poisoned weapon which Laertes had the best reasons in the world for clinging to with all his might and main. He is able, even in his dying moment, to force the poisoned cup from the hands of Horatio. Finally, what is the epitaph pronounced over him by Fortinbras? Does Fortinbras speak of him as a gentle scholar? He says: —

> Let four captains
> Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
> For he was likely, had he been put on,
> To have prov'd most royally: and, for his passage,
> The soldiers' music and the rites of war
> Speak loudly for him.

Whatever may be said for or against other peculiarities in the personation of "Hamlet," the evidence is irresistible in support of the presentation of the prince as a young man of splendid physique, nobly accomplished in all manly exercises. The delicate student theory has nothing whatever to sustain it except the odd notion that a man of undecided character, much given to casuistry and easy philosophizing, must necessarily be lank, lymphatic, and feeble.

THE FLORENTINE ARITHMETICIAN.

About three hundred and fifty years ago, when Venice was in the height of her power and the full flower of her glory, and when she was engaged in constant warfare with the Turk, there was among her senators one named Brabantio, who was held in honor by his fellows and by the Duke, or Doge, himself. The mistress of his household was his young daughter, Desdemona, whom he loved the more tenderly because her mother had died in her childhood, and the girl had grown to early womanhood watched over only by his fatherly eye, and had gradually come to fill a wife's and a daughter's place both in his household and in his heart.

The lack of the restraint of a mother's solicitude and cautions had developed in Desdemona an independence of character and a self-reliance to which otherwise she might not have attained: and this independence her position as the head of the domestic establishment of a member of the proudest and most powerful oligarchy of modern Europe greatly strengthened and confirmed. Desdemona's nature was gentle, submissive, and self-sacrificing, but at the same time earnest, frank, and passionful; and the result of the influence of such a life as hers upon such a nature was a union of boldness, or rather of openness, both in thought and in action, with a warmth and tender-

ness of feeling and a capacity of self-devotion which are found only in women of highly and delicately strung organizations. With an imagination which wrought out for her grand ideals, and a soul finely attuned to all the higher influences of life, she was yet a careful housekeeper, and gave herself up loyally to the duties imposed upon her by her position in her father's house. Notwithstanding her beauty, her rank, and her accomplishments, she had suffered herself to be little wooed, and had not inclined her ear to the voice of any lover. This was partly because of her youth, partly because of her preoccupation, but chiefly rather because she cherished in her soul such a lofty ideal of manhood that there were few noble gentlemen even in Venice who could captivate her eye, or touch her heart. One young Venetian named Roderigo had become deeply enamored of her beauty. He could not love her as she would be loved, and still less could she look upon him with an eye of favor; for he was a silly snipe — a compound of self-conceit and folly and foppery: a coarse but feeble animal, with an outside fantastically tricked out by his tailor.

About this time there appeared in Venice a valiant soldier of fortune named Othello. In person he was a stalwart, swarthy Moor, and some persons have supposed that he was a negro; but without reason, for he was born in one of the Barbary States on the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, where his family was of noble rank, and on one side at least of kingly blood. Even the worst enemy he had, in reviling him, did not call him a negro, or a blackamoor, but a Barbary horse. This Othello was a man of such valor, such military skill, and such strength of character, that having obtained service under the Venetian State,

he soon rose to high rank in its army, and became one of the most trusted of the Venetian captains. Brabantio admired, and loved, and trusted him, and received him often at his palace; and yet withal he held himself above this swarthy military adventurer; partly as a proud Venetian noble, and partly with that lofty arrogance which the fair-skinned man has always shown to his dark-skinned brother. And thus it happened that although Othello was really one of the most distinguished men in Venice, and visited Brabantio's house as an intimate, and thus saw the beautiful Desdemona often, her father never thought of him as a possible lover of his daughter. There was another reason which threw the old senator off his guard in this respect. Othello was more than old enough to be Desdemona's father. His black locks were streaked with gray, and his manner was grave, reserved, and silent. Had Desdemona's mother been alive, she would have been more cautious; for women, especially those who have had experience of the world, know that youth is not always the surest passport to the heart of a woman, even when she herself is young and beautiful.

While Brabantio and Othello talked, Desdemona listened, and soon there crept into her ears a delight she had never known before. She came to look upon Othello's visits as the greatest happiness of her life; and as she gazed upon this gallant soldier, she ere long saw in him not a dark-visaged, half-barbarous military adventurer, but her ideal of manhood, to whom she was willing to give a woman's love, and whom she could joyfully accept as the absolute owner and master of her body and her soul. The very fact that he had wandered from country to country, offering

his sword now to this sovereign, now to that, fighting strange and savage people, encountering peril almost for peril's sake, and visiting places which, although not many miles from the Mediterranean shores, were then more inaccessible from Venice and less known there than the remotest region in the world is now, cast over him an alluring charm in the eyes of this gentle, home-keeping, thoughtful maiden. It made the successful soldier seem in her eyes a sort of conqueror of the world; and, without even a summons to submit, she yielded to the conqueror all of the world of which she was mistress, herself. She did not hesitate to show the interest she felt in him, and when he was telling his strange and perilous adventures to her father, she would hasten from her household duties to sit with them and gaze and listen.

Othello, himself as modest as a maid, conscious, with all his self-reliance, of his unsettled position in the world, of his dark skin, and of the difference in years between him and this beautiful girl, at last could not mistake the nature of her interest in him, and was captivated even more by the sweet flattery of her spontaneous love than by her grace and beauty. All that he had of fame or fortune he had won by his sword, at peril of his life, through fierce endeavor. But here was one of the bright prizes of life, a decoration that he could not have hoped for, a happiness of which he had hardly dreamed, laid down before him, to be taken for the asking. And yet he did not ask. He who would have wrested a crown from a king, or laid his mailed hand upon the green turban of a sultan, timidly shrunk back from lifting to his arms the beautiful enamored daughter of a Venetian senator. At last Desdemona asked him to tell her in her own

eager ears the whole story of his life; and when she had listened with sighs and signs of sympathy, and still he looked, but spoke not, she told him that her heart longed for such a man as he had shown himself to be, and that if he knew one man who could tell her such another story, that would be a sure way to woo her. At such an avowal what self-distrust would hesitate? — and then he told her what she so longed to hear.

The first step taken, eagerness and ardor replaced self-distrust and timidity in the great soldier's breast. Of what he had won he would take immediate possession. And yet he knew that the senator would refuse, almost with scorn, to give a Moorish military adventurer his daughter. This Desdemona knew well also; and so when Othello proposed a secret marriage, she at once consented; but under all their circumstances this end was not easily accomplished.

During his brief wooing, and while he was making his arrangements for the secret marriage, Othello had one confidant. This was a man much younger than himself, one Michael Cassio, a Florentine, whom he loved and trusted; and whom, for his gallantry and his great accomplishment in the military and engineering science of the day, no less than for his own personal affection for him, he had recently made his lieutenant. Cassio was one of those men, not infrequently found among those who make arms their profession, who unite solid abilities and thoroughness of acquirement to a handsome person, a gay, bright nature, and a fondness and fitness for elegant social life. Of these men, gallant among the gallant, brave among the brave, brilliant in society, self-collected in the field, and capable in affairs, Cassio was a typical example. He was trusted by all, and admired and loved by all,

except the envious. He was just the man who might naturally have been himself the lover of Desdemona; but although among her many admirers, he had never enrolled himself as one of her lovers. He entered heartily into the scheme of his general, and served him as faithfully and efficiently in love as he had done in war; and by his aid Othello privately married Desdemona.

Among Othello's officers was a rival of Cassio's, Iago, possibly a somewhat older man, certainly a more experienced soldier, and one of great and widely recognized ability. He was so highly thought of by Othello himself, as well as by others, and his reputation had been so long established, that he had himself expected to be made the Moor's lieutenant; and some of the great ones in Venice had made personal application to Othello in his behalf. But the great captain had preferred the less experienced but better educated man, and had, however, given to his rival the secondary although important and distinguished post of standard-bearer, or ancient,[1] to Iago's disappointment and disgust. For the latter had counted much upon his reputation and his popularity, and with reason.

Iago was one of those men who early in life set themselves to the task of making friends as a means of ensuring success. His manners were singularly frank, and of an apparent spontaneous simplicity and heartiness. He seemed disposed to take a kindly interest in every person with whom he came into contact. There was an openness and candor in his manner, and a readiness to sympathize with others and to

[1] *Ensign* came to be called *ancient* from the pronunciation of *s* as *sh*: *ensign* being pronounced *enshin*.

serve them, a plain downrightness of speech, and a freedom in his way of giving advice, that made him sought as a confidant, and won him the sobriquet of "honest." No one could doubt for a moment the sincerity of such an open-faced, easy-going fellow, who to his heartiness and simplicity of manner added a prudence and an intuitive knowledge of the world which, added to his genial manners, won him general trust and confidence. In all kinds of trouble "honest Iago" was consulted; and in no kind did he withhold his aid, or at least his sympathy and his advice. For he was not one of your squeamish, stuck-up Pharisees who give offence by holding themselves above the weaknesses of common mortals; and so even the little creature Roderigo, who hoped to corrupt Desdemona's chastity by rich presents, went to him for counsel and assistance. Othello, who wished to marry her, went to Cassio.

One person might have been expected to feel some doubts of Iago's perfect honesty and good fellowship, his wife Emilia; but it would seem that she did not. A handsome woman, of strong passions and weak principle, she had been captivated by his bright, cheery manner, and his soldierly bearing. Nor was his manly vigor without attractions to her maturer years; and, as not infrequently happens in the case of such a woman and such a man, they married, she for a kind of besotted fondness, he for some point of interest. She was still a woman of such personal attractions, and so free in her talk and her behavior, that there was scandal about her and Othello; unjustly, however, for she still continued fond of Iago, although it would seem that her life with him could not but have led her to suspect sometimes that his gay off-hand manner concealed a crafty, selfish nature.

When Othello had safely married Desdemona he had no further concealment in the matter, which came to the ears of Roderigo and Iago on the evening of the wedding-day. They went instantly together to the house of Brabantio, hoping that Desdemona's father, by the exercise of his senatorial influence, could seize the person of his daughter before the consummation of the marriage; Roderigo's motive being love of the bride, Iago's, in part a cold, interested hate of the husband. For the giving of the lieutenancy to Cassio had roused all the low passions of his base, malignant nature; and although the Moor had advanced him, his disappointment at not getting the higher place so rankled in his venomous bosom that his whole mind was now bent upon the ruin of the lieutenant at whatever torture of the general. He already dimly saw that Desdemona's marriage to the former, the presence of the noble-hearted, handsome Cassio, and the senseless passion of the weak Roderigo might be united to serve his purpose. His motive, however, was mixed, and was largely mercenary, — the hope of gain in his pretended service of the rich fool, Roderigo.

It so happened that on this very night news reached Venice of an expedition of the Turks against the island of Cyprus, which was at that time a dependency of the Venetian State; and as Brabantio was on his way to arouse his friends for the recovery of his daughter, he was met by Cassio and other messengers who had been sent out to summon him, as well as Othello, to a council called at the Doge's palace, to decide what course should be taken against the Ottoman. The messengers had already come upon Othello in the street, where he was talking with Iago, and

had bidden him to the council. Iago had told Cassio that their general had just married — he did not say whom; and Cassio, faithful to the last, had pretended ignorance of the lady's name. When Brabantio saw Othello, in his wrath he forgot his dignity, and would have assaulted him; and for a moment a bloody contest between the two parties was imminent. But Othello's composed relf-reliance was not to be thus disturbed. With a word he checked the impending fray, reminding both friend and foe, with a gentle touch of pride and scorn that sat well upon him, that as to whether the question were to be decided by arms Othello might disregard both the provocation of the one and the officious partisanship of the other. The Moor was not a man to permit a street brawl about his wife between his friends and those of his father-in-law. Hearing of the council, Brabantio at once decided to lay his grievance before the Duke and his fellow senators.

He did not overrate their sympathy or their readiness to espouse his cause; for although they were in the midst of a consultation upon the public peril, and although Othello, who entered the council chamber with him, was greeted by the Duke with an announcement that he must immediately proceed against the Ottoman, when Brabantio broke in upon the council of war with the declaration that the Moor had stolen away his daughter, he was not only listened to, but Othello was at once put upon his defence. Calm in his consciousness of right, and in his knowledge of the importance of his services to the Venetian State, he simply told the story of his wooing; nor did he, in his semi-barbarian freedom from the conventionalism of European society, conceal that he had not

asked Desdemona to be his wife until she had very plainly hinted that she longed to have him do so. Othello was a magnanimous, high-minded man, but he was not quite a European gentleman. The Duke and the senators saw in his story the perfect justification of his conduct; and even Brabantio, although he resented the implication that Desdemona, who had slighted the admiration of so many young Venetian nobles, had been half the wooer of her swarthy, middle-aged lover, was compelled to admit that if what Othello said was true, his ground of paternal complaint lay only against his daughter. Desdemona was sent for; and with perfect modesty, but with the most unreserved frankness, she avowed her love for Othello, and that her duty was now to him first and to her father afterward. That question was thus briefly ended; and Brabantio resigned his daughter to the Moor, with the caution that the woman who had deceived her father might deceive her husband. Othello had occasion, although no cause, to remember this warning.

But another question immediately came up, in the discussion of which there was not a new, but a further revelation of Desdemona's nature. Othello must instantly set out for Cyprus; and he asked that during his absence his wife might be placed in a position becoming the military rank of her husband, and her own breeding. Thus Othello, under the pressure of the time, consented, although reluctantly, to leave his maiden bride behind him; but she was not willing to be left. Nor did she conceal the nature of her feeling. She said plainly that she loved the Moor to live with him; that to do so she had set at naught all the social restraints with which she had been surrounded; and

that were she to remain in Venice while he went off to Cyprus, the rites for which she loved him were bereft her. It is a remarkable fact, and one which has a bearing upon the conventional notions which are professed, if not quite believed in European society, upon such subjects, that notwithstanding her previous conduct toward Othello, and notwithstanding this confession of the sentiments and passions of unmitigated nature, we do not feel the slightest doubt of the purity and the modesty — I will not wrong womanhood by saying the chastity — of Desdemona.

The result was that the young bride, her appeal being supported by the eager request of her few hours' husband, had her way. The little fleet which set sail immediately for Cyprus bore Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, and Iago, whose wife, Emilia, attended the general's wife as her maid and companion. Roderigo also found a place in the expedition. Othello was in one ship; Desdemona, escorted by Iago, in another; Cassio in a third. They were separated by a storm; and Cassio's ship arrived first at the island. The next to reach the shore was that which carried Desdemona, who was welcomed by the islanders, with Cassio at their head. Iago lost no time; and at once began to found his plot upon the assiduous attention and courtesy which the handsome and gallant lieutenant, in conformity to the manners of the time, lavished upon the beautiful wife of his friend and general. Cassio was no more than courtly, and Desdemona's heart was in Othello's ship; but they kept gayly up the light gallantries of their society. She, to beguile her anxious longing, assumed a merry air, and seemed to amuse herself with Iago; and he, in the brief time that the party passed upon the strand before the arrival of Othello, managed to

exhibit his wit, his blunt cynicism, his grossness of nature, and his craftiness. His wit all tended to the degradation of womanhood; his eyes and his thoughts were given entirely to the enmeshing of Desdemona in a pretended intrigue with Cassio.

When Othello after his arrival had retired with Desdemona, and the rest had followed them, Iago remained with Roderigo to fill his shallow pate with vile slanders and gross suggestions, which had as their starting point a pretended fickle passion of Desdemona for Cassio, and with temptations which were to involve Roderigo in an attempt to bring Cassio into disgrace, and to bleed money into Iago's hungry pocket. For it is around Cassio, the most admirable, the most lovable, and the most brilliant figure in this story, that all its events revolve. It was Cassio's ruin, not Othello's or Desdemona's, that Iago chiefly sought. It was to his hate of Cassio that he was ready to sacrifice his general and his general's wife. The ancient was a man, and of course he could not brook with favor the insult which scandal said that Othello offered him in the person of his wife; but he was not so loving a husband, or of so delicate a sense of honor, that he could not and would not have borne this affront, if to do so had been to his interest. Indeed, it seems that he had endured it quietly, and that we should not have heard of it as a motive to his base action, had it not been for the favor shown by Othello to Cassio. It was the elevation to the lieutenancy of the man whom he sneered at as a Florentine arithmetician that galled the ancient, and determined him to sacrifice the happiness, and if necessary the lives, of all who stood in the way of his base ambition and his greed of gold. Moreover he suspected that the handsome young soldier had, no less

than the Moor, won the favor of Emilia. And more than all he hated him for his goodness, and for the love all bore him — for the daily beauty in his life, which he felt as a ceaseless, silent reproach of his own moral ugliness. Cassio is the central figure of this tragical story, the single object of Iago's machinations.

The Turkish fleet had been scattered and wrecked by the storm, which had only separated the Venetian ships; and Othello directed a triumphant rejoicing to be proclaimed in Cyprus. Cassio as lieutenant had a general supervision of the police of the garrison, the details of which he left to Iago's management; and the ancient determined that night to bring the lieutenant to disgrace in the eyes of his general. Cassio, with all his manly merit and admirable qualities, was not without points of weakness in his nature; and one of these, which may be called almost physiological, and against which, to his credit, he watched carefully, was an extreme sensitiveness to the excitement of wine. He could not safely drink as most men then drank, or even as many do now. The draught which steadier stomachs and stronger heads bore unmoved disturbed and inflamed his more sensitive organization. In this mere fact there was no degradation to Cassio; no more than there is to some men in their painful susceptibility to vegetable poisons, such as that of the ivy vine, which others handle with impunity. It was a mere trait of his physiological organization. If he had not guarded himself against it, he would have been culpable; but this he did. Of that which others took freely he denied himself the little which unsettled his otherwise steady brain. But on occasion of the rejoicings Iago managed to overcome Cas-

sio's resolutions, and to bring him to drink the one draught that was fatal to his self-control. The designing ancient apparently threw himself with his whole soul into the revel; in which he, not Cassio or even Roderigo, sang jolly drinking songs. The result was that the lieutenant, the officer of the night, got raving drunk, and had a brawl with Rodierigo which grew to such proportions that Othello himself was brought down from Desdemona's bridal bed to quell it. In his wrath he cashiered his beloved lieutenant on the spot.

Iago might now have been content; for if Cassio's disgrace was confirmed, he himself might have been sure of the lieutenancy. But he knew well the magnanimity of Othello's nature, and his love of Cassio; and he knew also how strongly his rival's virtues and accomplishments would plead in his behalf, not only with Othello, but with all to whose advice and entreaties the general would be apt to listen. Moreover the fiends of envy, hatred, and jealousy had now taken possession of him, and were running riot in his soul; and having once tasted of the hellish draught that they had brewed to celebrate their triumph, it operated upon him morally as wine did upon Cassio physically; he longed to drench his soul in it for the mere delight he felt in the sulphurous excitement. Therefore, not only to make Cassio's destruction sure, but to feed full his lust of revenge and wickedness, he determined to carry out his half-formed plan of involving in mortal animosity the two men who had provoked in him such kind of jealousy as his sordid soul could feel. Assuming his honest, sympathizing, confidential manner, he condoled with Cassio upon his misfortune, made light of it, and advised him to solicit Desdemona's influence

with her husband for his restoration; assuring him that Othello could deny her nothing. His purpose was to represent to Othello that Desdemona, upon whose kind feeling for Cassio he knew that he could rely, was interceding for her paramour.

The plot succeeded; for it was well laid, the materials were at hand, and the conditions were those of nature. Cassio easily enlisted the sympathies of Desdemona in his cause; and she pleaded for him, not only for kindness' sake, and for her admiration and regard for the man, but because she believed that she was doing her husband a benefit by striving to bring back into his service so brave a soldier and so accomplished an officer. She felt, too, a debt of gratitude to Cassio for his good offices in helping her to her husband, and remembered with a delicious pleasure how, when she, with womanish craft, had dispraised the man she loved, Cassio had defended him, and thus by opposing her had fixed himself forever in her good graces.

Iago soon found his opportunity. Cassio was begging of Desdemona the intercession in his behalf which she heartily promised, when Othello was announced, and the lieutenant, dreading to meet his superior until his peace was made, retired precipitately, just as Othello entered, accompanied by Iago. Desdemona lost no time, but at once began her intermediatory office, and plied her husband with all the arguments she could use, and with all the blandishments of a consciously beautiful and beloved woman. When she retired, having won more than half a promise from her husband, Iago dropped a hint containing just that little element of perverted truth that makes a lie more malignant and effective, that Cassio had shunned Othello because he felt guilty that he

should be round in private with Desdemona. He had some difficulty in effecting a lodgment of suspicion in Othello's mind; but at last, with fiendish craft, he accomplished it; and from that moment he worked this vein of mischief with unceasing pertinacity and subtle skill, until at last the rough, swarthy, middle-aged soldier's soul was filled with the wretched thought that his beautiful wife was listening favorably to the guilty suit of this handsome, splendid young Florentine gallant.

Iago, however, felt the need of some material evidence in support of his insinuations; and as time wore on, and some week or two had passed, accident provided him with what he sought.[1]

Othello had given Desdemona a handkerchief, remarkable in itself, and dear to them both as the first token of his love. It was supposed, according to the superstition of the time, to have peculiar virtues because it had been woven with spells by an Egyptian sibyl. Iago, from a vague notion that it might be useful to him in his plans, had often begged his wife Emilia to steal it from Desdemona. But although the not over scrupulous waiting gentlewoman was willing to oblige her husband in this respect, the young wife guarded the token so carefully that Emilia had not been able to accomplish the theft. One day, however, when she was in attendance upon Desdemona, Othello had come in tormented with jealousy, and his wife, supposing that he was ill, had offered to bind his brow with the handkerchief, which he had petulantly thrust aside, so that it fell upon the floor. Emilia saw the opportunity of obliging her husband, picked up

[1] This lapse of time is assumed as a necessary condition of the narrative doubt if it could be demonstrated.

the silken token, and concealed it just as he came in. She was in some doubt whether to give it to him; but soon he snatched it from her only half unwilling hand; and the circle of this caitiff's evidence was completed. To drop the handkerchief where Cassio should find it, and to tell Othello that he had it, was matter of course. The consequences might have been sufficient to Iago's purpose in any case; but fortune helped him. Cassio, with a weakness not uncommon in men of his sort, had become enamored of a beautiful courtesan, Bianca, who doted on him; and to her he gave this handkerchief. And one day, after Othello had in vain demanded the handkerchief from the distracted Desdemona, and while he was watching Cassio, who should come in, stung with jealousy, but Bianca, to fling the handkerchief into Cassio's face as the gift of a new mistress; and thus the Moor saw, as he supposed, his first love-token to Desdemona in the hands of the cast-off mistress of his wife's paramour.

This had happened just after Iago had set Othello on the watch to see how lightly Cassio spoke to him of Desdemona and her love, the real subject of their talk being Bianca. For Iago, with a craft and cruelty beyond that anywhere related of the devil and his angels, went steadily on, under his guise of honesty and hearty affection for Othello, to lead him into a frenzy of jealousy, which would ensure Cassio's death. Whether Desdemona lived or died, he did not care, not the telling of a lie; and as for Othello, so he might have revenge by torturing him with suspicion, he would have much rather had him live, that he might be his lieutenant. How he effected his purpose, subtly suggesting occasion of jealousy while openly warning Othello against it; how he seemed devoted, heart and soul, to the man

whom he was slowly and coolly driving mad; how at last, when the Moor's blood was thoroughly infused with the venom that lay under this aspic tongue, he changed his tactics, and turning directly round, bore false witness against Cassio and Desdemona, it is needless to set forth in detail. One point is to be remarked as to Othello. When his suspicions were aroused to that exasperating pitch which is not certainty, but adds to all the settled pain of certainty the irritating torment of suspense, he suddenly turned upon Iago and demanded with dreadful threats that he should prove Desdemona unchaste, menacing him with worse than a dog's death if he should fail to do so.

Othello could conceive of no middle course or compromise in this matter. He was not really jealous, as a woman is jealous, of his rival. His pang was that which was inflicted by the consciousness of a monstrous, hideous wrong inflicted by the hand he most loved — of the sight of that which he held purest and best, self-fouled and smirched before his eyes. Had Desdemona been in his thought still chaste, she might have admired the handsome Cassio to the top of her bent; she might even have ceased to love her husband, and the depths of Othello's soul would have been untroubled. And even now he was ready to believe in her absolutely: and had Iago failed to prove his accusations by an accumulation of evidence that would have convinced any mind, the Moor would still have given his heart and his trust wholly to Desdemona, and would have spurned her accuser to destruction.

Meantime Cassio pressed his suit to Desdemona, to use her power to bring him again into Othello's

favor; and Desdemona, as unsuspecting as Cassio himself of any peril to either in so doing, lost no opportunity to entreat Othello to take back his cashiered lieutenant, clenching with every sweet entreaty the suspicions that Iago had driven through Othello's heart. When at last Othello saw the handkerchief returned by Bianca to Cassio, he determined to kill Desdemona, and asked Iago to get him poison; but he, partly in craft, not to be implicated in the murder, partly in diabolical ingenuity and delight which his base soul had developed in the details of the dreadful business he was managing, advised Othello rather to strangle her in her bed; tempting him with the thought that she would then be sacrificed upon the very place made sacred by the marriage vow which she had violated. The suggestion captivated the imagination of Othello, and he decided to do the murder that night.

He might have relented — for all the while his love for Desdemona was unabated — had it not been that just at this time an incident occurred in which Cassio again was honorably involved, and which indirectly confirmed his suspicions. Ludovico, a kinsman of his wife's, arrived from Venice with despatches from the Senate to Othello, and, entering with Desdemona, he presented them. They recalled Othello, and gave his place to Cassio. To inquiries which Ludovico naturally made about Cassio, Desdemona replied with perfect simplicity, owning her grief for the breach between the lieutenant and her husband, and avowing her regard for Cassio; and when she heard that Othello was called back to Venice, and that Cassio would have his office, she, longing to be at home again, and rejoicing at Cassio's good fortune, said that she

was glad to hear this news. All these expressions of natural feeling, made as she was talking apart with her kinsman, drove Othello mad, and at the last, calling her devil, he struck her. She did not for a moment resent the injury and insult, offered her in the presence of Ludovico and the other messengers from Venice, but merely said, "I have not deserved this;" and from this time, through all the foul abuse that Othello heaped upon her until she took her death from his hands, she, slandered, outraged, and finally murdered, clung, in the innocency of her pure, warm nature, to the love that was proving her destruction.

The blood in his half-savage veins now running fire, Othello went straight to Desdemona's chamber to accuse her openly of adultery. He found Emilia there, and endeavored to get from her some testimony in support of the evidence he already had; but in vain. Emilia spoke out stoutly for the honor of the mistress that she loved. Being sent for her, she returned with her, and remained until Othello, addressing her as if she were Desdemona's bawd, requested her to leave them alone together; doing this with a motive that prompted a like action soon after. When Emilia had gone out, Othello began his accusation of Desdemona, but at first not in plain terms. And she, chaste, loving, unsuspecting, did not at first understand him; but supposing that he was angered at being recalled, and that he regarded her father as the instigator of his removal, she prayed him not to lay the blame on her, and in a most touching manner reminded him that if he had lost her father's favor, so had she. At last she suspected what was passing in his thoughts; and finally she heard herself be-strumpeted by the very lips for whose kisses she had committed her downright violence

and storm of fortunes. Yet more and worse: Othello having said the worst that man can say to woman, not content with this, called in Emilia, and before his wife's eyes paid her the wages of her assumed bawdry; doing this, however, not so much to insult his wife as to torment his own soul by putting Desdemona on the lowest grade of womanhood, and his intercourse with her on the lowest footing. In his frenzy he tore open his own wound to pour in fire.

Emilia, leaving Desdemona stunned with the blow her heart had received from Othello's hand, went out to bring in Iago to her mistress's succor. For not even yet did Iago's very wife suspect that this honest fellow had any hand in the dreadful business that was going on. And when Iago, with expressions of wonder and sympathy, asked how all this could be, his wife answered him that she was sure some villain, some subtle scoundrel, had invented slanders against her mistress to get some office; and the simple, honest fellow replied, "Fie, there 's no such man: it is impossible." Now Emilia made her answer in no sarcastic mood, and with no covert meaning. It is important to remember, as indicative of the sort of man Iago was, and of the hold which his blunt, off-hand, honest-seeming manner had given him upon all, that not one of those who knew him most intimately, not even his very wife, suspected his agency in this tragedy until its last dreadful scene was enacted. Emilia, although her breast was disturbed by some vague general doubts as to Iago, had no suspicions of him in regard to Desdemona, and loved and trusted him to the last.

And now the inevitable end was near. Iago, professing to avenge Othello's wrong, had undertaken to kill Cassio that night, that the two paramours might

be taken off together. But he was too crafty to use his own sword when another's was at his hand. Roderigo and his ridiculous passion for Desdemona here come in again as the incongruous element which is found in all human affairs; and Iago, by persuading Roderigo that if he would but kill Cassio, he might possess Desdemona, brought him up to the desperate point of assassination. Cassio, however, was protected by a secret, or flexible coat of mail, worn under his doublet, and when Roderigo assaulted him he was unhurt, and himself wounded Roderigo severely. But Iago, who had been watching the event, rushed in from behind, cut Cassio in the leg, and fled. Cassio's outcries brought assistance, and it came partly in the person of Iago, who reëntered in his shirt, with a light in one hand and a sword in the other, and who immediately avenged Cassio by stabbing Roderigo to death. This Iago did, not only to rid himself of Roderigo's evidence against him, but to secure himself in the possession of the money and jewels of which he had cheated the poor fop, with the pretence of giving them to Desdemona. The catastrophe of this great tragedy was brought about quite as much by the mercenary as by the malicious motives of him by whom it was contrived.

Othello entered his wife's bed-chamber to put her to death almost as if he were a priest about to perform a human sacrifice at the command of his supreme deity. The turbulence of his passion had subsided, and before the death-bed of his love he stood rather heart-broken than revengeful. He was a minister of justice, called upon to execute judgment upon the best beloved of his soul. He might have rushed upon her and smothered her sleeping; for she slept, although

she had had vague apprehensions of some impending evil. Othello, however, went quietly to Desdemona's bed, and talked to her and kissed her till she awoke. Then she, not yet suspecting his purpose, asked him to come to bed. His answer revealed at once the end before her; but she was still ignorant of the cause of his murderous intent; so much so that she simply asked him what it was, almost as for mere information. Then he told her that she had given his handkerchief to Cassio, and she to her instant denial added the entreaty that he would send for the man and ask him. And not till now was the turning point of this long story passed, and hopelessly. For if Othello had thought Cassio was alive, he, whatever his belief in regard to Desdemona, would, being the man he was, have surely sent for him, and the whole matter would have been explained. But he answered Desdemona that Cassio had confessed his guilt with her, and that honest Iago had for that reason stopped his mouth forever. Then Desdemona, simple and outspoken, even in her extremity, exclaimed, "Alas! he is betrayed, and I am undone." This seeming lament for her lover before her husband's face put fire to Othello's soul, and in a moment he wrought his dreadful vengeance.

As he stood horror-stricken before the body of her who had been his wife, he heard the voice of Emilia outside calling him in alarm; and then again he heard it not; knowing nothing but the thought of what he had just done. Emilia when she gained admittance told him of the murderous fray, and that Cassio was not killed; and while she was relating this, Desdemona revived a moment to say that she was falsely murdered, to accuse herself of her own death, and to

utter with her dying breath her undying love for Othello. Emilia, whose tongue was always free, who always had "the courage of her opinions," and the blemishes in whose character were atoned for by a certain magnanimity of soul, spoke her mind plainly as to the nature of Othello's act; and when he told her that her husband was the accuser of Desdemona she was at first absolutely incredulous; but on Othello's reiteration of his assertion, with commendation of Iago's honesty, the possibility of its truth dawned upon her, and she cursed him bitterly. Then she gave the alarm, which brought in all who were within call, including Iago. Her first words were prompted by her remaining confidence in this vilest of all men known in story; so double-faced was he even to his wife, and so trust-inspiring was the face he showed the world. She called upon him to speak and disprove the assertions of Othello, confidently uttering her own disbelief that he was such a villain as those assertions made him, and showing, as well as saying, that her heart was full of many woes. Here and throughout this final scene of the tragedy, which was also to be the final scene of her own life, this loose-mannered, loose-tongued woman rose into a grandeur of self-abandonment and devotion to truth and love in which she towered above all others present, even Othello himself, and became the ruling spirit of the catastrophe.

Iago, seeing Desdemona dead, and believing Cassio to be so, had no longer a motive for concealment, and owned that he had told Othello the story that had maddened him, which he said was true. Emilia instantly ranged herself on the side of the right, and gave her husband the lie; feeling as she did so that it

would be at the cost of her life. The complication was soon explained, and Othello by a few words found that he was the murderer of an innocent, loving wife, for whose life he would have given his own ten times over. He rushed at Iago with his sword; but the man who a few days before would have slain or scattered a company of Iagos missed his aim; and the villain, after mortally wounding his wife, escaped, and the valiant Moor, as he was called, was easily disarmed. He got another sword; but he felt that it was harmless in his unnerved hand, and thenceforth he abandoned himself to his great despair. Soon the wounded Cassio, the noble and innocent occasion of all this sorrow, was brought in with his enemy a prisoner in his train; not, however, to suffer death at the hands of Othello, who, again attacking, only succeeded in wounding him. In the hope of involving Othello's fate with his, and thus of possibly escaping the full punishment of his crime, he had confessed that the Moor and he had plotted Cassio's death; and this confession Ludovico then announced. Their intended victim, bleeding in body and in soul, but with his noble heart still full of love, said only, "Dear general, I never gave you cause." And then the great captain, coming to him and bowing his head and abasing himself before his young subordinate, said, "I do believe it, and I ask your pardon." It was all that Othello could then do. And now Iago, completely baffled, took temporary refuge in the sullen silence behind which guilt often skulks, and refused to utter one word in explanation of the machinations which had brought about this awful catastrophe.

For Othello, being the man he was, there remained but one exit from the unspeakable and unendurable position in which he stood; and he took it quickly.

Disarming the suspicions of those around him by the calm delivery of a message to the Venetian Senate, and by the relation of a vengeance he had taken upon a malignant Turk, with his own hand he pierced his bursting heart, and dying by Desdemona's side breathed his last breath upon her lips.

Of all the chief personages in this sad story, only he who was the pivot and the central figure of it lived to witness its end; and he saw it in sad triumph. Brabantio had sunk under the desertion of the daughter who had been the light of his home and the darling of his old age; the silly Roderigo, and Emilia who had, at least, the nobility of faith and truth and love, had met death at Iago's hands; Othello and Desdemona lay lifeless in each other's arms, a sacrifice to the revenge of a mercenary, slighted hypocrite; and the spotted monster Iago was borne out to end his life in torture at the discretion of his intended victim, the Florentine arithmetician; for Cassio ruled in Cyprus.

THE TALE OF THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

WHO knows where the Forest of Arden is? Who cares to know, that has dipped his lips in the springs of beauty and delight that are ever flowing there? Such a man hardly deserves to enjoy — if indeed he can really feel — the cool twilight charm that dwells beneath its high bending boughs, or the bright gleams that gild the green sward of its open glades. Certain men far gone in membership of the Universal Geographical and Egotistical Society, which has existed in all times and in all lands, have indeed discovered that this forest was in France, near the river Meuse, between Charlemont and Rocroy, not far from the town where the French met their final defeat in their last war, Sedan. But as for me, I believe that this enchanted and enchanting forest was not far from the seacoast of Bohemia; or mayhap that it was that very wood near Athens through which Hermia and Lysander, Helena and Demetrius pursued each other with such Puck-bewitched cross-purposes, where the slayer of the Minotaur and the Queen of the Amazons hunted and made stately court, while Oberon and Titania quarrelled and made up about her little henchman, and glorious Nick Bottom, crown-prince of all egoists, sought to play the lion, and like many egoists ended in playing the donkey; or that perhaps it was in the midst of the still-vex'd Bermoothes, which, not-

withstanding certain solemn proof that it was the Bermudas, I am sure was one of those floating, wandering islands that gladdened and misled the happy mariners of three or four centuries ago, who were not brought down to that sorrowful barrenness of soul that comes of knowing everything.

Wherever this Forest of Arden is or may have been, it is the scene of a story that makes it more than any other the home of idyllic romance in the world's memory. We think of it without giving it locality. There dukes unknown to heralds and genealogists, banished from nameless principalities by revolutions unheard of in history, sought refuge and found happiness, living lives of impossible delight. There lovers, fleeing from each other, met like mountains removed with earthquakes, where they had least hope of meeting. There shepherds, and Court-fools, and English hedge-priests, and lions, and gilded serpents, and palm trees were found together without the slightest seeming incongruity; and there the dukes and their courtiers passed their time in hunting and moralizing, and singing sylvan songs with echo for their chorus.

The special Duke with whose happy deposition our tale begins had left behind him, at the court of his usurping brother, a daughter named Rosalind, who so loved and was so beloved by her cousin Celia that to part them needlessly was even beyond the cruelty of the man who had ruined and banished her father. And this Rosalind was one of those women — of whom, happily for mankind, there are always some in the world — that are beloved by everybody. She was good, she was witty, she was beautiful; but above all, she was lovely. Goodness, wit, and beauty, even when combined, do not always win love from all men; and

chiefly they do not always win it from all women. There is a special gift of loveliness or lovability, which, strange to say, is not always accompanied by goodness. This gift Rosalind had, added to all her other qualities; and it was for her loveliness that she was loved. She eclipsed her cousin, the daughter of the reigning duke; but the cousin endured and even rejoiced in that superiority in her which she might have resented in another.

Among the other persons who were or who should have been attached to his fortunes, the banished Duke left behind him three sons of Sir Roland de Bois, one of his most faithful adherents. Two of them were, it should seem, too young to go with him into his exile; but the elder, Oliver, was a selfish churl in a gentleman's place, and he became a fawning courtier to the usurper, and an oppressor of his youngest brother (who bore his father's name, Orlando), robbing him of even his slender birthright, and striving to crush his manly spirit and grind him down into a condition little above peasanthood. Driven into rebellion, Orlando at last one day quarrelled with his elder brother, and took him by the throat with a hand which, if he had clinched it, would have quieted his unnatural revilings forever. For Orlando was not only a handsome, well-shaped man, but he had the grip of a practised wrestler. This his brother knew, and hoped by his fondness for that perilous sport to rid himself of one, the untaught graces of whose life affronted him with a daily reproach. There was to be a match before the court the next day, and he gave the Duke's wrestler (who as champion challenged all comers) to understand that he would be glad to see Orlando's neck well broken.

The two princesses were at the wrestling; and as

they saw Orlando offer himself to contend with the victorious champion, who had already left three of his opponents with broken bones upon the ground, they became his partisans, and entreated him not to expose himself to defeat, with danger of maiming or even of death. But he was in a mood at once despairing and determined; and touched although he was by the interest which these fair, high-born ladies took in him, he refused to withdraw, saying in the bitterness of his heart, which was made more bitter even by the sight of so much loveliness so far beyond his reach, that if he were foiled, there would be only one shamed that was never gracious, and if killed, he should but leave a place that would be better filled when he had made it empty. But fortune rained favors from the eyes of one at least of these ladies; and Rosalind's heart leaped with joy as she saw him throw the bony prizer of the Duke speechless to the ground. His victory caused inquiry as to who he was; and when the Duke found that he was the son of his old enemy, he flung away in anger. Another tie then quickly bound Rosalind to Orlando; for she demurely said to herself, and then spoke it out to Celia, that as her father had loved Sir Roland as his soul, she could not but feel some duty of deep interest in his son. And so they both congratulated and cheered the conqueror; and Rosalind, who acted always upon impulse, and in whom a pure heart played the part of discretion, took a chain from her neck and asked Orlando to wear it for her; knowing in her heart that, according to the usages of chivalry, then not quite forgotten, this would make him her knight, if he would only choose to think so; but that if he did not, it would be merely a princely crowning of his victory.

The sudden light of so fair a fortune dazed Orlando; and he stood speechless while the ladies walked away. But Rosalind had chained herself to him, and at every lingering step she felt the bond tightening upon her. Had he been bold, she might have been startled into shyness; but as he was shamefaced and speechless, her heart spoke for him and called her back; and with a demure mockery which was characteristic of her talk, she said to her cousin Celia that her pride fell with her fortunes, and turning she asked him what he would, and if he called. But he, like some modest, brave men, was speechless before a woman whose every tone was sinking into his heart as she showed him that he had only to ask and have. Whereupon Rosalind began to compliment him upon his wrestling; and then, provoked beyond restraint at her own emotion and his reserve, stammered out in her impulsive way that he had overthrown more than his enemies. And so they parted.

Had Rosalind been one whit less pure and true, and perhaps we should say less beautiful and lovely, she would have lost some womanly charm in this tender assault upon her bewildered lover — for such Orlando had become in those bright, brief moments. And in either case she had begun a perilous game, and one likely to be fatal to any woman who, even with all Rosalind's charms to load the dice, was not ready to set the fortunes of her heart upon one cast. She did not shut her eyes to her position; for she was clear-headed as well as brave; and soon afterward she confessed her love to Celia, mocking herself with a rueful wit as she told it. For Rosalind, with all the sweetest and tenderest traits of woman's nature, had not only wit, which not a few women have,

but humor, which is the possession of very few women indeed. And in this she differed from a far-away cousin of hers named Beatrice, whose tongue had a sting in it like the snapping-thong of a carter's whip. But in Rosalind's wit there was never any sting; and the sweetness of her nature and her humor working together made her laughing sallies the mere overflow of a gay, impulsive heart. Another difference between these ladies was that Beatrice always exercised her wit upon others, while Rosalind was as often as otherwise witty at her own expense.

The Duke, suspicious with the consciousness of guilt, and angered by the success of a son of his old enemy over his retainer, turned upon his niece and drove her from his court. Celia refused to part from her cousin, and they left the palace together in disguise; Rosalind assuming the dress and character of a young man, which she could the better do because of her height (for she was a stately beauty), her gayety of heart and her self-reliance. She felt the wrong of her uncle's anger, and she resented it with as much spirit as if she had not been dependent upon him almost for her daily bread. Celia too stood up, but with more calmness, for her cousin. But at once Rosalind's light heart rose with a rebound, and she went out upon her exile as if she were on her way to a merrymaking. With them, for cheer and for protection, the princesses took the Court-fool, a fellow named Touchstone, one of the wisest and most cynical of his race, who had under his motley coat a genuine love of his old master's daughter.

As for centuries in Europe all roads led to Rome, so in the world and the time in which these charming

people lived, all roads led to Arden. And why not? How should it be otherwise, since thus we would have them, and the very title of this story is "As You Like It"? So Rosalind went straight from her gruff uncle to her father, and, as it proved, to her lover. For Orlando had found his brother even more his enemy than the usurping Duke; and warned by Adam, an aged and faithful attendant, who loved him dearly, they turned their steps away from home together, and where should they too wander but into the Forest of Arden; there was positively no other place in the world where they could go.

There the Duke was living with a few followers, happier than he had ever been in his palace. For he had a clear conscience, a healthy body, and a contented spirit; and with these a man can be happy anywhere, and under any privation, so that he does not suffer pain, hunger, or anxiety. Among his friends was one Jaques, a gentleman who was not of much use in killing venison, or in other woodcraft; for besides that he was in the first place an old man, so old as to be past hunting or fighting, he was much more given to musing and to morbid moralizing than to more active employments. They called him the melancholy Jaques; but *melancholy* had not then quite the exclusive meaning of silent musing sadness that it afterward acquired; and hence the character of this personage has been universally misunderstood. Then *melancholy* conveyed the notion of what we sometimes call a bilious disposition, and was even used where we now use *monomania*. Jaques himself described his melancholy to Rosalind, when they met one day in the forest; and in describing it he told her first what it was not. And of the kinds of melancholy

that it was not were these: the courtier's melancholy, the soldier's melancholy, and the lawyer's. Now courtiers, soldiers, and lawyers are by no means peculiarly inclined to sadness, and musing, and silence. On the contrary, the courtier's melancholy, as Jaques said, is proud, the soldier's is ambitious, and the lawyer's is politic. Hence we see that what Jaques meant by melancholy was what we now call cynicism — a sullen, scoffing, snarling spirit. And this Jaques had. He was simply a cynic, and a very bitter one. And his cynicism had come from two causes, one of which we learn from himself directly, and the other indirectly from his talk and from what we are told of him. He said himself that it came from the sundry contemplation of his travels, which by often rumination wrapped him in a most humorous sadness. And by *humorous*, again, he meant something quite different from what we now generally understand by the same word. He would not have called Falstaff humorous — at least not with regard to his jests, but only, if at all, because of his indulging a peculiar humor of mind. His own humorous sadness was a sadness of ill-humor. His humor was cynicism; and it tinged all his views of life and of his fellow-men, so that when he thought over his travels and his experience of the world, which had been wide, and had extended through many years, he took a gloomy view of life and a low view of mankind. He was one of those men who believe in nothing good, and who, as the reason of their lack of faith in human nature and of hope of human happiness, and their want of charity, tell us that they have seen the world. This sort of man has generally reached middle age, and is likely to be one who has himself lived in his youth a

loose, pleasure-seeking, selfish life. And such had been the life of Jaques, before he began to decline into the vale of years.

One day, soon after Rosalind with Celia and Touchstone had come to the forest, Jaques lighted upon the Fool as he lay basking in the sun and railing at Fortune. For Touchstone, too, was a cynic, and veiled his sneers under the form of such jests as were then tolerated in men of his condition. Soliloquizing, Touchstone was taking the saddest, blackest view of human life, looking upon it as a mere hourly passage through growth and decay. This so chimed with Jaques's own humor, that the gloominess of the Fool made him cheerful, and his lungs began to crow like chanticleer; and soon coming where the Duke was, he broke out into praise of the Fool — the only words of commendation that we know of his utterance with regard to any human creature. He wished he was a Fool, and began to snarl as usual; saying that if he had only free scope for his bitter tongue, he would cleanse the foul body of the infected world, if it would only patiently receive his medicine. Whereupon the Duke, who, in his honest, trustful, charitable soul and cheerful spirit, was as unlike Jaques as one man could be unlike another, and who, alluding to his disposition to carp and sneer, had before said of him that he was "compact of jars," broke out upon him with reproaches, and told him some plain truth: that his own life had been so sinful that he had no right to censure others; that he had been a libertine, sensual and brutish; and that what he called his melancholy and his medicine was the mere disgorging upon others of the foulness with which his own mind had been infected.

In brief, Jaques was Falstaff without his fat and his humor.

While the Duke and Jaques were talking thus, as they were about to sit down to meat Orlando rushed in, sword in hand, and demanded food, upon pain of death to any that refused. Whereupon Jaques, who at first sneered at him, said, alluding to his aged inability to fight, "An you will not be answered with reason, I must die." But when Orlando told the Duke that poor Adam, his old attendant, was fainting with hunger and weariness, he was made welcome, and sent out to bring in his faithful servant. When he had gone the Duke turned to Jaques, and told him to mark that others were unhappy, and played more woeful parts than theirs. This hint was enough to start Jaques off upon a more than usually characteristic outpouring of his cynicism. His reply was that all the world was only a stage, and that the men and women in it were merely players. Their birth and death he called mere entrance and mere exit. Then, stirred up by the welcome, degrading thought, he gave his companions a specimen of a cynic's table talk, and as he ate garnished the feast, bit by bit, with a view of life in all its stages, describing the infant, the schoolboy, the young lover, the manly soldier (for then most gentlemen in their prime were soldiers), the justice, and the old man, each in scoffing and disparaging terms. In fact he seized the occasion to sneer at the representatives of the whole human race.[1]

[1] This view of Jaques's character, and of the spirit and meaning of his censures, was first set forth in *Shakespeare's Scholar* (New York, 1854), a book well known in Germany. This is mentioned because the same appreciation has been proclaimed since that time (as I find by reference, having read only the English version of the work) by one of those German critics whom some people, themselves generally included, regard

Directly after their arrival in Arden Rosalind and Celia bought a sheepcote and a flock, and engaged the services of a shepherd named Corin. Upon this Corin, and upon another clown in the forest, did Touchstone vent his cynicism, using his licensed tongue as a double-edged sword, to slash the rustic folk among whom he was, and the courtiers whose society he had left; in which attacks the courtiers got the worst of it, because Touchstone knew them the better, and because their artificial life laid them the more open to attack. Among the Court-fools of the day Touchstone was distinguished by the dryness and causticity of his wit. No softness of manner won love for him, no playfulness of disposition gave any charm to his fooling, no sentiment tempered the keen blast of his wit, which blew steadily in all places and in all companies. He was a purely intellectual jester; was self-possessed, and

as having taught readers of English blood and speech how to appreciate Shakespeare. He has done so only with this remark: "The melancholy which this man [Jaques] imbibes from every occasion has *always* seemed to most readers, and especially to most actors, as mild, human, and attractive, and they represent it as such; but it is rooted, on the contrary, in a bitterness and ill humor," etc. (*Shakespeare*. G. G. Gervinus. Leipsic. 1862) This "always" was true until four years before the work of Gervinus was published. No one of Shakespeare's plays has suffered more from the preparers of the acting copies than this; no one of Shakespeare's characters is so misrepresented on the stage as Jaques. On the stage, for instance, it is Jaques who pities the poor wounded stag; but Shakespeare's Jaques does no such thing, that passage belongs to one of the banished Duke's attendant lords. The real Jaques only makes the poor brute's sufferings the occasion of sneers at mankind. The effect of the stage Jaques has been to unsettle even the best judgments in regard to the character. I am surprised to find such a sound and thoughtful Shakespearean critic as Mr. Hudson still infected by it (*Shakespeare: his Life, Art, and Characters*, 1872); and even the author of *Friends in Council* is betrayed into such a misapprehension as to say (in the *Essay on Despair*) that Jaques's melancholy was "innate." Shakespeare makes Jaques himself tell us that his melancholy was "compounded" and "extracted," the fruit of his long observation of mankind, of his knowledge of the world.

stood upon his Fool dignity; and was not to be led off into playful pranks on the one side or the weakness of sentiment on the other. He was one of your self-conscious men of the world who look at everything as a disinterested bystander; only with a motley dress he had a motley speech, such as was permitted to Court-fools. Hence he and Jaques were so accordant.

While Touchstone was bewildering Corin with scoffs at his shepherd's life that were over-subtle for his rustic understanding, Rosalind came upon them reading some verses which she had found stuck up on a tree, as was the fashion, it would seem, in the Forest of Arden. The verses were strangely enough in praise of a woman of her own name. She read them aloud; whereupon Touchstone began to sneer at them, and offered to rhyme so eight years together, and in fact began the eight years immediately, after no very decent fashion, when Celia came up, also reading some verses, and they too deified the name of Rosalind; for Orlando had nothing to do but to hunt and to write love verses. Rosalind let Celia read her lines, and then began to ridicule them in merry mood; for notwithstanding her position, her heart was ever gay, and she took her exile almost as a welcome holiday from the formalities of court life, and enjoyed it as if it were what saucy boys, such as she pretended to be now, call a lark. You may suppose that she suspected who had written these verses. Possibly she might have done so if she were not in the Forest of Arden; but she did not. Remember that she did not know that Orlando was in the forest, and what was yet more important to her, she did not know that he loved her. He had received all her sweet tokens of warm interest at the wrestling-ground like a lifeless block; and there

she had left him standing in dazed silence. And that she did not suspect any inclination on his part toward her, she showed on the first day of her arrival in Arden, when she overheard a young shepherd named Silvius confessing his love for a shepherdess, Phebe, who scorned him; and when he went away she confessed that in searching his wound she had found her own, and broke out: —

> Jove! Jove! this shepherd's passion
> Is much upon my fashion.

And this knowledge that she had given her love unasked to a man who had not even shown the slightest interest in her was ever afterward an abiding consciousness in her heart and motive in her conduct. Now Celia saw at once how matters were and began to tease her tall cousin, dropping hints about the chain, and pretending that Rosalind must know who was the verse-writer, and saying it was wonderful how people who had been separated could meet, until at last Rosalind exclaimed, "Good, my complexion!" —that is, in the phrase of the day, My good girl, remember what I really am — what is my nature — "dost thou think, though I am caparison'd like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition?" And she heaped questions upon Celia with most petitionary vehemence, until her cousin told her plainly that it was Orlando, adding — in her ignorance of what was in store for herself — that he had tripped up the wrestler's heels and Rosalind's heart both in an instant. When she saw that Celia was in earnest about Orlando's being in Arden, Rosalind's first thought was that she was there before her lover in man's apparel, and what she should do with her doublet and hose. Then she poured out questions more rapidly than be-

fore, asking what he was doing, what he said, what he came there for, where he dwelt, and so forth and so on; dropping slyly in among her inquiries, as if it were merely one of the heap, the most important of them all, "Did he ask for me?"

While Rosalind and Celia were talking of this strange event, who should enter but Orlando himself, and Jaques with him! The seeming page and shepherdess slipped aside and listened; and in spite of the old saw that listeners hear no good of themselves, there Rosalind had the joy of hearing Orlando confess his love and exult in it in the very teeth of the jeers of Jaques against the tender passion, and his scoffs at this particular manifestation of it. Jaques and Orlando soon parted — for they were ill-sorted company — and then Rosalind, reassured by what she had heard Orlando say, recovered her spirits, and, confident in her disguise, determined to speak to Orlando like a saucy lackey, and "chaff" him. And she began very boldly, "Do you hear, forester?" and when he answered she asked, "What is 't o'clock?" But when Orlando, giving her as good as she sent, told her there was no clock in the forest, she showed at once what was uppermost in her heart by saying, "Then there 's no true lover in the forest;" adding that if there were he would mark the time by sighing every minute, and groaning every hour; for her merry spirit, now that she had heard him say that he loved her, mocked the very passion that she shared. And then she launched forth into sallies of wit which might well have become a saucy young fellow. But any direct question to her brought her straight back to her woman's consciousness. For when Orlando asked her where she lived, she answered, "With this shep-

herdess, my sister, here in the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat;" which most unmanlike comparison showed well enough that verily there was no doublet and hose in her disposition.

She led him soon to talk upon the subject most pleasant to her ears by making sport of the man that hung odes upon hawthorns and elegies upon brambles, all deifying the name of Rosalind; and to this poor love-shaken fellow she offered to give some good counsel. Orlando confessed of course that he was the man; whereupon more scoffing: She believed none of it; he was no lover; he had not the marks upon him; and if he were he could not make her believe so. But then, dropping out of her badinage, Was he indeed the man that wrote the verses? and with a shy tenderness of tone and her yearning consciousness that she had loved him before he had asked her, Was he really in love as much as his rhymes spoke? Of course he protested; and then again her spirit rebounded, and she shot off on a tirade against love, winding up with an offer to cure him of what she called his madness, if he would come and make love to her, a saucy lad, in the person of that Rosalind he made so much of. Surprised perhaps, but unhesitating, he agreed to do so — for what pleasanter pastime could there be in Arden? and besides, this saucy young chap had a certain look that reminded him of Rosalind, so that at first he thought that he was Rosalind's younger brother — and with this agreement they parted.

And now what joy to Rosalind! Day after day did Orlando follow the rank of osiers by the murmuring stream which led to the cottage that hung in the skirts of the forest like fringe upon a petticoat; and there he found the pretty lad always waiting for him,

impatient for his coming, and yet concealing her woman's longing with her assumed boyish sauciness. There, with Celia by, she teased him, alternately alluring him to make love to her as if she were indeed his very Rosalind, and flouting him as if she were the merry lad who had promised to cure him of his fondness. She had even gone so far in her vicarious performance of the duties pertaining to Rosalind as to bring it about that he should kiss her, and had attained to very subtle discrimination as to the quality of his kisses; a feat less strange and difficult then than it would be now; for then, all men, even if not of the same family, did occasionally kiss each other. What golden times were those when every day brought an ever fresh delight; and what sweet revenge for the giving of her love unasked, to hear him declare each day his love unchangeable for the Rosalind whom he thought far away, and removed from him as much by distance as by circumstance! And what a conscious wealth of happiness in the knowledge that at any moment she could raise him to the highest heaven of delight by simply telling him that she was Rosalind indeed! Was she never tempted to the revelation? Yes; a hundred times it trembled upon her lips, and we may be sure would have been uttered, in spite of her doublet and hose, were it not that she was in the Forest of Arden. And he, seeing her daily and talking with her, looking into her eyes, and hearing the voice that so moved him on the day of his victory over the wrestler — did he not divine who this bright, handsome lad really was? It should seem that he must have done so. But yet we must remember that he had seen both Rosalind and Celia in their own persons but once: that then Rosalind was in her woman's weeds, which added to her

height, and made her seem much larger than this slip of a lad, who was witty and saucy, while the Rosalind that he remembered was dignified and gentle, or at most tender. And if, notwithstanding all this, we must believe that a lover's eye would have penetrated the disguise, we must remember that the lover had upon him the enchantment of the Forest of Arden. But, hardest point of all, Celia, who saw all this real love-making that pretended to be sham — she who had no personal interest in the deceit, and who was dying to see her cousin really happy — would she not have told Orlando his good fortune? Yes, verily; mortal woman could not have kept that secret had not she too been under the spell constantly murmured by the leaves of the Forest of Arden.

So the secret was kept, and Rosalind fell every day a fathom deeper in her love; fretting if Orlando did not keep tryst to the minute, and relieving her pretty anger by abusing him to Celia; who, demure little puss as she was, agreed that he was a faithless fellow, a very Judas Iscariot among lovers, and then was snapped up and soundly rated for her complaisance, as indeed the sly girl knew and hoped would happen.

One day Jaques met Rosalind and Celia, and, captivated with the wit of the seeming page, he begged his better acquaintance. But Rosalind had heard what Jaques was, and had little liking for him; and moreover she had matters on hand more to her mind; for she was expecting Orlando, who, after that provoking fashion of men, would make her wait while he was occupied in his business of hunting or of attending on the Duke. And, besides, we must remember that although the affair was very much in earnest with her, with him it was mere pastime and make-believe. So Rosalind

turned off Jaques by breaking jests upon him as a traveller. While this was going on Orlando came up and said, "Good day and happiness, dear Rosalind;" whereupon the surly Jaques, shrinking from any such gallant and well-framed speeches, went hastily away. But did Rosalind turn at once to Orlando as he stood there expectant of her greeting? Not she. He was behindhand, and must be punished; and so she pretended not to see him, and keeping her eyes upon Jaques as he walked off she called after him, "Farewell, monsieur traveller: Look you lisp and wear strange suits; disable all the benefits of your own country; be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are, or I will scarce think you have swam in a gondola." Then as Jaques disappeared in the winding forest path, she turned on her lover, and, seeming to discover him, broke forth, "Why, how now, Orlando, where have you been all this while?" and fell to teasing him after her bright, gay, pretty fashion. She was more than usually keen; but after she had relieved herself a little in this way she began to hunger again for assurances of his love, and asked him — of course as Ganymede (for that was her boy name), and only in her assumed character of Rosalind — to woo her, assuring him that she was in a coming-on mood that day, and might consent.

At last she thought that it would be great sport and greater happiness to see how the marriage service would sound between her and Orlando. She soon contrived to bring about the proper situation. Orlando consented, and Celia was to be the priest. But Rosalind, in her mingled gayety and earnestness, took the words out of her sister's mouth, tutored Orlando,

and spoke her own part without tutoring. Then, still in her merry mood, but with the shadow of her great anxiety beginning to fall upon her heart, she asked him to tell her how long he would have his Rosalind after he had possessed her; nor when he answered, lover-like, "Forever and a day," could his ardor check the chill that fled along her veins, and she answered, "Say a day without the ever. No, no, Orlando; men are April when they woo, December when they wed; maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives." But suddenly, remembering that this was rather playing her own part, Rosalind, than the part she played, a saucy page playing Rosalind, or rather, perhaps, caught by the ever quick returning flood of her own gayety, she cast loose from sentiment and began in swift phrases a satire on her sex: "I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen; more clamorous than a parrot against rain; more new-fangled than an ape; more giddy in my desires than a monkey; I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain," and so on, rattling down her little jests upon him as thick as hail that comes from a summer cloud while half the heavens are bright, half gloomy. But the sky was soon all clear, and she was again the light-hearted Rosalind. Again, — until he said that he must leave her for two hours; and then, demurely seeming to assume a forlornness that she really felt, she said, "Alas! dear love, I cannot lack thee two hours." But Orlando had to go to attend the Duke at dinner; yet he promised to return at two o'clock: for then dukes dined, in castles as well as in forests, at midday. Then she took the airs of a woman who pretends to feel that she is neglected, and talked of

dying; and then again remembering how she had often waited for him, broke out in seeming jest, but in real earnest, with a denunciation of him as a break-promise if he were one minute behind his hour. And when he had gone, and Celia threatened her with discovery because of the scandalous way in which she had misused her sex, she pleaded that she was out of her depth in love, and confessing that she could not be out of sight of Orlando, went to find a shady nook where she might think of him and of her love for him until he came back.

Again, however, Orlando failed to show an ardent lover's punctuality; but this time with new reason. While Rosalind was trying to divert herself with the mooning Silvius, who had brought her a love letter from his own mistress, who had been captivated by the pretty Ganymede, a man entered and asked the way to her sheepcote. At once, however, he recognized her and Celia by a description he had heard of them, and he told them a strange story: How Orlando had found a man sleeping in the forest with a green and gilded snake about his neck, and a hungry lioness watching him, ready to spring when he should move; how the snake, seeing Orlando, slipped away, who thereupon had recognized his cruel elder brother (for he too, having been driven out by the usurper, had come to this marvellous Forest of Arden), and turned away twice to leave him to the fate that he deserved, but yielding to that kindness which is ever nobler than revenge, turned back and fought the lioness and slew her; when, added the teller of the story, with self-revealing forgetfulness, "from miserable slumber I awoke." He had a bloody napkin in his hand, which Orlando had bid him take to the youth he called his

Rosalind to plead his apology for failing to keep his appointment. Then Rosalind swooned away — fainted in dead earnest; for no Orlando was by to see her make believe to be herself. But hardly had she recovered when she resumed her part, and craftily called Orlando's brother's attention to her admirable counterfeiting and begged him to report its excellence to Orlando himself. And then she let off, even in her wan weakness, a joke the kind of which was quite characteristic of her and peculiar to her situation. For when Orlando's brother told her to counterfeit to be a man she answered, "So I do; but i' faith I should have been a woman by right." This bit of fun was purely for her own comfort and solace; for the point of it could not be seen by him to whom it was addressed. So when, some days before, the Duke had met her in the forest and questioned her, and asked her of what parentage she was, she had answered, "Of as good as he;" whereupon he laughed and let her go. He, however, had laughed only at the pertness of the pretty boy; but what delight it must have given this she sauce-box to make that answer to her own father!

Rosalind, however, with all her love of fun and her delight in cross purposes, had ever an eye to the honor as well as to the happiness of her real self; and now she saw that matters had gone so far that they must be brought to a fitting conclusion. As if to help her to the end that she desired, Orlando's brother and Celia had fallen into such furious fondness for each other that they must be married immediately. At this, Orlando was well pleased; but it caused him to express his grief that his own longing for his Rosalind could not be satisfied. Whereupon master Ganymede told

him an enormous fib: that he had learned the black art of a magician, and that by means of potent charms he could set his Rosalind before him, and he might marry her if he would. (The sly dog said nothing upon the important question whether the real princess would be willing to be married.) And then came up Silvius and Phebe; and Rosalind led the whole party into a game of cross-purposes about their loves and their marriage, taking part herself, and bringing the farce to an end by promising them all their satisfaction on the morrow.

Orlando was so well content with this promise that it might seem to some that he now suspected, or was even sure, of the identity of Ganymede and Rosalind. And one solemn teller of the tale, who treats its light surface play of wit and joy with characteristic effort at profundity,[1] says that Orlando's brother Oliver saw through her disguise at the fainting scene and told his discovery to Orlando, who thereafter knew with whom he had to do. But this is mere profound evolution of moral probabilities which have no place in the Forest of Arden, and shows strange ignorance of the facts of the true story. For the next morning, the Duke and Orlando meeting, the Duke asked Orlando if he believed that the boy could do all that he had promised; and the lover answered that he alternately doubted and believed, adding a comparison that has become a sententious expression of that condition of mind: "As those that fear they hope and know they fear." And again, when afterward the Duke remarked some likeness between Ganymede and his daughter, Orlando agreed to the likeness, adding, however, "But, my good lord, this boy is forest born." Their doubts,

[1] Gervinus, in the book before mentioned.

however, were soon resolved; for while Touchstone, who had come in with a country weneh whom his courtly wit had captivated, was explaining to Jaques the virtues of a lie seven times removed, the very God of Marriage, great Hymen himself (who lived with the lionesses and the snakes and the English hedge-priests in the Forest of Arden), entered, leading the very, very Rosalind, decked in woman's garments (for there were trees that bore those mysterious although necessary articles in the Forest of Arden); and there was a great scene of recognition; and the Duke gave his daughter to Orlando; and they all coupled just as you like it; and Rosalind, after teasing them with her wit and enjoying their bewilderment, said: —

> Whiles a wedlock hymn we sing,
> Feed yourselves with questioning;
> That reason wonder may diminish
> How thus we met, and these things finish.

Rosalind's woodland escapade was over; and although she had enjoyed it to the full, the merry girl was well content. For her sallies of wit were but the bright bubbles that floated from the rapids and shallows of her lighter moods over the deep-channelled flow of her really sober nature. She had been sadly in earnest from the time when her heart took the part of a better wrestler than she, and he overthrew more than his enemies.

But the wondrous tale of the wondrous Forest of Arden is not quite finished. To them all, as they stood there ready to worship Hymen, there entered Jaques de Bois, the second son of old Sir Roland, who told them that as Frederick, the usurping Duke, was on his way with a mighty power to take his brother and his followers and put them to the sword, he was met by an old religious man, who with few words converted

him both from his purpose and from the world — such power had hermits in that marvellous Forest of Arden — and that he himself had become a hermit, bequeathing his crown to his banished brother.

Amid all this joy, did the moralizing Jaques find any cause for his rejoicing? No; he was too set in the ways of his peculiar melancholy. The sight of so much real happiness was more than he could bear; and he too withdrew to hide his chagrin in a hermit's cell. The pleasure of others filled his breast with bile and envy; and, with a few civil words to the gentlefolks and a snarl at his fellow cynic Touchstone by way of wedding benison, he disappeared, leaving the honest hearts to their well won happiness.

THE BACON-SHAKESPEARE CRAZE.

WOULD to heaven there were unquestionable evidence that Bacon did write the plays contained in the famous folio volume published at London in 1623! Would that, as there is now a consensus of critical opinion that the lady of the last century who decided that it was Ben Jonson who "wrote Shikspur" was wrong (although even that, it would seem, is not sure beyond a doubt), it might be made as clear as the sun in the heavens that her rival female critics of our own day are right in proclaiming Francis Bacon the man! True, this decision, like the other, affects in no way the value or the interest of the plays. It neither lessens nor enlarges their significance as regards the material, the mental, or the moral condition of the English people at the time when they were produced. For the statesman-philosopher and the player-poet were strictly contemporaries, and lived at the same time in the same city. The question (if it were a question) is not at all akin to that, for example, which has been so long discussed, and which is not yet decided, as to the authorship of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey." For that is not a mere effort of curiosity to find out whether those poems were produced by a blind ballad-singer who spelled his name H o m e r, or by an open-eyed epic poet of some other name, but a question as to the period of the production of the poems, as to their pur-

pose, as to the condition of the society in which they were produced, as to the intellectual record embodied in their language, and as to the historical value of the incidents which they profess to record. It is a question which touches the origin, the character, and the development of the most remarkable people and the brightest, richest, and most influential civilization of antiquity. But whether "Hamlet," "King Lear," and "Othello" were written by Francis Bacon or by William Shakespeare, or by John Smith, so they were written by an Englishman, in London, between the years 1590 and 1610, affects in no way their literary importance or interest, their ethnological or their social significance, their value as objects of literary art, or their power as a civilizing, elevating influence upon the world. The question (if it were a question) is merely a large variety of that small sort of literary puzzles which interest pene-literary people, of the sort who are disturbed to the profoundest shallows of their minds by uncertainty as to who is the author of that foolish saying, "Consistency, thou art a jewel," and who search volumes of Familiar Quotations and vex other folk with letters there-anent, in hopes to allay the agitation of their souls.[1]

For one, I avow myself wholly indifferent upon this subject. What is Shakespeare to me, or what am I to Bacon? They are no more. Even what they were when they lived concerned only themselves and their personal friends. What they did is of the greatest moment to the world for all time; but it would be of

[1] Or who spring to critical life in the discovery that Hamlet should say that he is "to the manor born." I have certainly received fifty letters, indeed many more than fifty, suggesting this new reading. A man who could make it should no more be trusted with a copy of Shakespeare than a boy of nine years with a revolving razor.

the same value, the same interest, the same potential influence, whether the "Novum Organum" and the "Comedy of Errors" were written by either of them, or by both, or by neither, or whether Shakespeare wrote the "Novum Organum" and Bacon the "Comedy of Errors." I am no partisan of William Shakespeare's. I take no whit more interest in him, *qua* William Shakespeare, than the United States troops seemed to take in the battle sometimes called the Bladensburg races. I should not feel aggrieved or injured to the value of the pen with which I am writing if it were proved that the Stratford yeoman's son, who went to London and became rich in the theatrical business, was as incapable of writing his very name as his father and his mother were; but every man of common sense and even a little knowledge of the literary and dramatic history of the times of Elizabeth and James I. has the right to feel aggrieved and injured when the productions of the two greatest minds of modern times are made the occasion of a gabble of controversy, the sole foundation of which is a petty parade of piddling, perverted verbal coincidences, which have no more real significance than the likeness of the notes of two cuckoos, or of two cuckoo clocks. And therefore *placeat Diis* that there might be discovered, under the hand and seal of William Shakespeare, a confession that he was an impostor, and that the Earl of Southampton and Ben Jonson and John Heminge and Henry Condell, and the people of London generally, were dupes, and that Francis Bacon did write "Titus Andronicus" and the "Comedy of Errors," and so forth through the list. There would be so much more passed to the credit of him who perhaps was "the greatest, wisest," but was surely not "the

meanest, of mankind." [1] That is all. This fuss would be over, "and soe well ended."

The subject is one upon which some very worthy and very "literary" people are in a sad state of mind, and about which they have been going on in a more or less spasmodical way for some years; and now there comes about it a stout handsome volume of six hundred and twenty-five pages, which represents so much genuine enthusiasm and such an amount of honest, thorough, systematic work on the part of an intelligent, accomplished gentlewoman, that to treat it as it must be treated, only upon its merits, is an ungrateful and almost a forbidding task.[2] The occasion of this volume and the substance of it are furnished by some memorandums of words, phrases, proverbs, adages, and so forth in Bacon's handwriting, which seem to have been made by him, perhaps for reference, and possibly for the improvement of his style. They fill fifty sheets or folios, as we are told, and they are preserved in the well-known Harleian Collection of manuscripts in the British Museum. Known long ago, they were described by Spedding, Bacon's able and accomplished editor, who, however, did not deem them of sufficient importance to be included in his great edition of Bacon's writings. It would have been well if they had been left to moulder in their fitting obscurity; for they tell the world nothing that it did not know before, and so far as Bacon himself is concerned

[1] See *Evenings with a Reviewer*, by James Spedding, 2 vols. 8vo, 1883, in which Macaulay is ground slowly into fine dust: see also *The Personal History of Lord Bacon*, by Hepworth Dixon.

[2] *The Promus of Formularies and Elegancies (being private notes, circa 1594, hitherto unpublished) of Francis Bacon, illustrated and elucidated by passages from Shakespeare.* By Mrs. Henry Pott. With Preface by E. A Abbott, D. D. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

they add nothing to his reputation either for wisdom or for knowledge, — certainly nothing for scholarship or for critical acumen. In fact, they are at best only the dust and sweepings of his study; such stuff as everybody, except those whose literary appetite is a small sort of curiosity about distinguished people, would gladly see put to real service to mankind in the kindling of fires or other like domestic function. Their editress, however (Spenser says "poetress," and Ben Jonson "conqueress;" why may we not say "editress"?), brings them now to light with a higher purpose than the mere gratification of petty literary curiosity. She fancies (fancies! believes, with a faith which would remove mountains, if faith indeed were such an uncommon carrier) that they establish beyond all reasonable doubt the claim which she and a few fond fellow-worshippers have set up for Bacon to the authorship of the plays which William Shakespeare, in his lifetime, claimed as his; which all his personal friends, and more, his personal enemies, believed to be his; and which have been accepted as his for nearly three hundred years, not only by the world in general, but by all the scholars and critics who were thoroughly informed upon the subject: — a not illaudable purpose, and one which she has pursued with such a touching union of fervor and singleness of heart, and such perfection of that candor which disdains to take advantage by any concealment or dexterous perversion, — common accompaniments of enthusiasm, — that the result of her labors cannot be contemplated without sadness, and, moreover, without sorrow that it may not be treated with patience, hardly with decorum.

The theory which this great mass of unconnected

memorandums is published to sustain is simply this: Bacon must have written out these words and phrases and proverbs for his own use. Some few of them are found in his acknowledged writings, but the most of them he did not use in those writings; and between these, and indeed between a great number of them, and certain passages of the Shakespeare plays there is (so says enthusiasm) such likeness, either in word or in thought, that the unavoidable conclusion is that he wrote the plays. The logic is of the lamest; for it ignores practically, if not avowedly, the fact that these words and phrases and adages are in their very essence the common property of the world, — were the common property of the world at the time that Bacon wrote them down; and that Bacon made notes of them for his own convenience chiefly because they were such common property. Moreover, the painful and elaborate deploying of the passages in the plays which are supposed to sustain this theory, or, to speak rightly, this fancy, exhibits no identity of phrase or of thought which will sustain this conclusion, or indeed a conclusion of any kind, about them.

There is only one way of showing what and how great the failure is; and that is the examination of some of the most striking of the sixteen hundred and fifty-five notes which, with their accompanying illustrative passages, make up the bulk of this big book. The process may be wearisome; but if our task is to be performed at all, it is unavoidable.

The very first memorandum which is illustrated is most characteristic of the whole of this inept and absurdly inconclusive performance. It is, —

"*Corni contra croci.* Good means against badd, hornes to crosses." (Promus, 2.)

This is illustrated by five passages from the plays, of which here follow three : —

> And bear with mildness my misfortune's cross.
> 3 Henry VI., Act IV. Sc. 4.
> And curbs himself even of his natural scope
> When you do cross his humour.
> 1 Henry IV., Act II. Sc. 2.
> I love not to be cross'd.
> He speaks the mere contrary. Crosses love not him.
> Love's Labour 's Lost, Act I. Sc. 3.

This is a hapless beginning ; for except in the last line of the last quotation, "cross," although it has the same sound and is spelled with the same letters, is really not the same word that appears in Bacon's memorandum. Although etymologically the same, as an expression of thought it is not the same ; for it means a wholly different thing. The cross in the "Promus" adage is the material cross (+), produced by the setting together of two straight rods or sticks at right angles. It is the cross of the crucifix, used figuratively to represent the influence of divine goodness and self-sacrificing love. On the other hand, the horns of this adage are the horns of Satan, which are used to typify the spirit of evil. Thus the opposition of good and evil was expressed. Moreover, the crucifix, or any cross, as that of a sword-hilt, was supposed, even in Bacon's time, to have the power of exorcising evil spirits. Satan himself could not face it. An impressive scene it is in "Faust" where the throng of armed men draw their swords, and present to Mephistopheles, not their points or their edges, but their cross-hilts, from the sight of which he hides his eyes and shrinks away. This is the cross, and this the meaning, of the "Promus" adage. But in all the instances cited above from Shakespeare the word "cross"

means merely opposition, movement against, and (except in the third and fourth cases) consequent disaster. "Misfortune's cross" is, This disastrous stroke of misfortune; "When you do cross his humour" is, When you do vexatiously run counter to his humor. So in the other cases. In these passages there is not the remotest suggestion of the cross of the crucifix which is to be opposed, as a token of divine love and power, to the horns of Satan, as the embodiment of evil. The notion of any connection between them and the adage is preposterous. We are told at the end of the illustrative passages that the word occurs "thirty times" in Shakespeare's plays, which any one might see by consulting Mrs. Clarke's Concordance. So it might have occurred three thousand times, and with just as little significance or pertinence to the matter in hand. As well cite in illustration of the "Promus" adage, —

> *Cross*-patch,
> Draw the latch,
> Sit by the fire and spin;

and very much better, —

> Ride a cock horse
> To Danbury-*cross*,

for at Danbury there was such a cross as Bacon had in mind.

Because this is the first example, and because it is so very characteristic and typical an example of these marvellous illustrations of the coincidences between the Shakespeare plays and Bacon's "Promus," more time and attention have been given to it than can be spared to those which follow; through the fretful array of which we must push rapidly.

We turn a leaf, and at the top of the page we find, "*Nolite dare sanctum canibus*, — Give not that

which is holy unto dogs" (Promus, 11); which is illustrated by the following passage from "As You Like It:" —

Celia. Why cousin! . . . not a word?
Ros. Not one to throw at a dog.
Celia. No, thy words are too precious to be cast away upon curs.
Act I. Sc. 3.

Again a typical example of a sort of "illustration" which swarms through these pages. It is absolutely without importance, and without significance of any kind. For as the reader will doubtless have already seen, the words in the "Promus" are from the New Testament (Matt. vii. 6); they were known all over Europe, and had surely been in constant colloquial use for centuries before Bacon was born. And there are hundreds of just such meaningless illustrations in this volume.

It is difficult to keep one's countenance, even if the effort should be made, when we find Bacon's memorandum (Promus, 24) of Virgil's "Procul, o procul este profani" (Away, away, ye profane), illustrated by Falstaff's outbreak upon Nym and Pistol: —

Rogues, hence! avaunt! vanish like hailstones! go!
Merry Wives, Act I. Sc. 3.

In the newest fangle of Shakespearean, or anti-Shakespearean, criticism are we required to assume as a postulate that a dramatist of the Elizabethan period was unable to use his mother tongue in a plain, direct, and somewhat effective manner, without reference to a commonplace book of the Latin classics?

Our next example is one of a sort not uncommon, in which the same word occurs in both "Promus" and play, but with a meaning wholly and absolutely opposite. It is the following: "*Semper virgines furiæ*" (Promus, 43); in which Erasmus notes the remark-

able fact that the Furies are always represented as maidens, as angels are always masculine. The illustration here is from "Much Ado About Nothing:" —

> Her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December.
>
> Act I. Sc. 1.

In this speech, Benedick, on the contrary, expresses his surprise; he regards it as an extraordinary combination that virginal beauty should be accompanied by sharp temper and a shrewish tongue, — a union that would not have astonished Erasmus, nor, indeed, Bacon.

These illustrations of Bacon's commonplacing by the Shakespeare plays frequently present us, on the one hand, an adage or a phrase so long known the civilized world over that no repetition nor use of it by any writer in any language, within the last five hundred years, would be stronger proof of acquaintance with any other writer who also used it than the assertion that there was a sun in the heavens; and, on the other, a string of passages which have not only no relation to the phrase to be illustrated, but none to each other; and which are like a class in a district school, — Yankees, Irish, Germans, French, and Italians, all bawling out together at the word of command, some right and some wrong, none with any real understanding of what they are saying, and having in blood, in speech, or in purpose no semblance of kindred, coherence, or unity. Of this sort is the following: —

"*Et justificata est sapientia a filiis suis*, — Wisdom is justified of her children." (Promus, 249.)

This, again, is from the New Testament (Matt. xi. 19), and was the common property of Europe for cen-

turies before Bacon's time; its English form having been nearly as well known as the Ten Commandments or the Lord's Prayer three hundred years before Bacon was born. It means, we need hardly say, that the children of wisdom justify (that is, prove) their parentage by their conduct; they "behave as sich," — an adage as nearly true as "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," or as "Just as the twig is bent the tree 's inclined." This has the following illustrations: —

And make us *heirs* of all eternity. Love's Labour's Lost, Act I. Sc. 1.
Earthly godfathers of heaven's lights. *Ib.*
This *child* of fancy. *Ib.*
The first *heir* of my invention. Dedication to Venus and Adonis.
The *children* of an idle brain. Romeo and Juliet, Act I. Sc. 4.

What possible connection or relation is discoverable between these passages and the declaration in regard to the children of wisdom? There is none, except that in the one, as in the others, the idea of childhood or of heirship is presented. Had Elizabeth given her young Lord Keeper a monopoly of these?

Passing rapidly on, among these memorandums we find the very familiar phrase "*Prima facie*" (Promus, 299); the illustration of which (Love at first sight, "As You Like It," Act III. Sc. 5; "Troilus and Cressida," Act V. Sc. 2; "Tempest," Act I. Sc. 2) I pass by in mute admiration, as I do that of our next example, "A catt may look on a kynge" (Promus, 489); which is supposed to be the origin of the following question and answer: —

Ben. What is Tybalt?
Mer. More than prince of cats. Romeo and Juliet, Act II. Sc. 4.

That is, I would pass it by, leaving it to stand in staring ineptness and puerility, but for its flagrant

exhibition of a kind and degree of ignorance of Shakespeare's writings which is characteristic of the Bacon-saving Shakespearean. For the reason of Juliet's cousin being called prince of cats by the witty Mercutio is that "Tybert, Tybalt, Thibault" (all really one name), means a cat, just as "Grimalkin" and "Tabby" do in English. Tybert is the name of the cat in the Middle Age apologue, "Reynard the Fox." And in the old Italian story of "Romeo e Julietta," which furnishes the whole substance of the Shakespeare tragedy, Juliet's cousin is named Tibaldo. This story was translated by Arthur Brooke into an English poem, "Romeus and Julietta," and published at London in 1562; and this poem it is that was dramatized into the great English tragedy. In it, Juliet's cousin's name is Tybalt. So far, then, is it from being true that he was called prince of cats because Francis Bacon wrote among his commonplaces, "A catt may look on a kynge" (shade of Aristotle, what an inference!), that it is absolutely impossible that the "Promus" memorandum had any connection with Mercutio's speech. For Juliet's quarrelsome kinsman was made known to all English readers by his typical name in a rhymed story, which was well known (and which soon became popular) at a time when the future philosopher and Lord Chancellor was in long clothes, — he having been born in the year before that in which Brooke's "Romeus and Julietta" was published. His "Promus" memorandum could have had no more to do with the calling Tybalt prince of cats than it had with the origin of "Puss in Boots."

"Neither too heavy nor too hot" (Promus, 651), a saying which was applied to a bold thief, who would steal anything not too heavy or too hot for him to

carry, is illustrated by sixteen passages from the plays, not one of which has the slightest connection with it or similarity to it, except the presence of one of the two common English words, "heavy" and "hot;" as may be gathered from the fact that the first is, "Are you so hot, sir?" (1 Henry V., Act III. Sc. 2), and the last, "Seneca cannot be too heavy nor Plautus too light." (Hamlet, Act IV. Sc. 2.)

Perhaps one of the most startling of these illustrations is that of "a ring of gold on a swynes snout" (687); which degrading satirical comparison is presented as the origin of Romeo's beautiful extravagance "like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear." The absurdity of this is not all apparent without a consideration of the whole of the lover's simile: —

> Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night
> Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear: —
>
> Act I. Sc. 5.

which is but a variation of the passage in the XXVIIth Sonnet: —

> Save that my soul's imaginary sight
> Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
> Which like a jewel hung in ghastly night
> Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new.

It would seem, then, that the solemn figure of Night with her dark, begemmed robe was suggested to the author of Romeo and Juliet by a pig's snout, with a ring in it to keep him from rooting.

That memorandum 706, "*Laconismus*," from Erasmus's "Adagia," should be illustrated by "Like the Romans in brevity" is fairly Irish in its blundering; as the Laconians were not Romans, but Greeks, which Francis Bacon surely knew. But as the illustration is from "King Henry IV.," perhaps it was the embryo Pistol who put in his oar here. He was in

the habit of talking of Trojan Greeks and Phrygian Turks, and the like two-headed monsters.

Many others of Bacon's "Promus" memorandums are from Erasmus; and at meeting among them the one here following, every true "American" heart must flutter with joy and pride: —

"Riper than a mulberry. (*Maturior moro*, — Of a mild, soft-mannered man, etc.)" (Promus, 869.)

Did Bacon, — tell us, did he, — looking forward nearly three centuries, project his all-creative mind into the dramatic future of this country, and in this memorandum give the New World the germ of the great mulberry, Colonel Mulberry Sellers? It must be so. The colonel, beyond a doubt, was a mild, soft-mannered man. How, indeed, is it possible that anybody could have dreamed of a mulberry, unless the word had been previously commonplaced by Bacon! Perish the thought! The discovery of the "Promus" establishes, beyond a question, that Mulberry Sellers is Bacon's boon to "America."

In like manner we learn that Charles Reade has hitherto been most unjustly credited with the conception of one of his own novels; for as number 959 of the "Promus" memorandums we find "Love me little, love me long;" and what more is needed to show where Mr. Reade found the title and the motive of his charming book?

In memorandum 1544, "*Soleil qui luise au matin, femme qui parle latin, enfant nourrit de vin, ne vient point à bonne fin*," who can hesitate for a moment at discovering that we have the origin of that admirable poetical embodiment of common sense and common experience,

> Whistlin' gals an' crowin' hens
> Never comes to no good ends?

But this part of our subject is becoming too grave and serious, and I must bring it to a close with an illustration of a lighter and more amusing nature; to wit, the following: —

"*Nourriture passe nature.*" (Promus, 1595.)

This adage, it need hardly be said, means that breeding is a second nature, stronger than that with which a man is born. Would it be believed, without the evidence of black and white before us, that, in proof that Bacon wrote the Shakespeare plays, the first and principal illustration of this adage is the following passage from Pericles? —

> Those mothers, who, to nousle up their babes
> Thought nought too curious, are ready now
> *To eat those little darlings whom they lov'd.*
> So sharp are hunger's teeth, that man and wife
> Draw lots who first shall die to lengthen life.
>
> Act I. Sc. 4.

The italic emphasis of the third line is mine; and I have thus distinguished it, because as an illustration of "*Nourriture passe nature*" it surpasses all the Shakespearean jokes that I have had the good fortune to encounter. There are five hundred mortal octavo pages of proofs and illustrations, of which the foregoing are fair examples, that Francis Bacon wrote Mr. William Shakespeare's thirty-seven comedies, histories, and tragedies! One more of them shall delay us a moment. "Promus" memorandum 1404 is "O the;" and this wholly senseless union of words is seriously illustrated by the following passages, of which it is assumed to be the origin: "O the heavens!" "O the devil!" "O the time!" "O the gods!" "O the good gods!" "O the vengeance!" "O all the devils!" "O the Lord!" "O the blest gods!" It is needless to give the titles of the plays

from which they are taken. When Benedick said that he should die a bachelor he did not think that he would live to be married. When I wrote the foregoing assertion about Shakespearean jokes I had not read this number of the "Promus" and its illustrations. They bear the palm. The fair editress might have deprived us of our laugh if she had perceived that the meaningless "O the," which could be the origin of nothing, is a mere irregular phonetic spelling of *oath*, — *othe*, in which the first letter was accidentally separated from the second. This is shown by the immediately following memorandums: (1405) "O my L[ord] S^{r}," (1406) "Beleeve it," (1409) "Mought it please God that," or, "I would to God." Why Bacon wrote down phrases like this, here and elsewhere, seems inexplicable; but that is not to the purpose.

What is evidently regarded as the strong point of this array of evidence in favor of the Baconian origin of the Shakespeare plays is folio 111 of the "Promus." It is endorsed by Bacon, "Formularies and Elegancies;" and it contains forty-five memorandums (1189–1233) of phrases either of salutation or of complimentary remark in connection with the time of day, or what has been known time out of mind in the English language, and among people of English blood and speech, as giving the time of day. First among these memorandums is "Good morrow" (1189); we find also among them "Good matens" (1192), "Good betimes" (1193), "Bon iouyr, Bon iour bridegroome" (1194), "Good day to me, and good morrow to you" (1195), and the pretty conceit, "I have not said all my prayers till I have bid you good morrow" (1196). Here Bacon's enthusiastic champion throws down the

gauge and takes a stand so boldly, and maintains it so earnestly, that it would be both unfair and unwise not to set forth fully the point upon which she joins issue.

It is asserted that this folio generally, and particularly in these phrases of morning salutation, supports "a reasonable belief that these 'Promus' notes are by the same hand that penned 'Romeo and Juliet.'" The ground of this reasonable belief is that these forms of salutation, although they "are introduced into almost every play of Shakespeare, . . . certainly were not in common use until many years after the publication of these plays," and that "it appears to be the case" (*risum teneatis!*) that "they were of Bacon's introduction." This is insisted upon again and again: as, for example, "It certainly does not appear that, as a rule, any forms of morning and evening salutation were used in the early part of the sixteenth century, nor, indeed, until after the writing of this folio (111), which is placed between the folios dated December, 1594, and others bearing the date January 27, 1595;" and again, "It seems to have been the practice for friends to meet in the morning, and to part at night, without any special form of greeting or valediction;" and again, "In Ben Jonson's plays . . . there is hardly one, except in 'Every Man in his Humour,' where you twice meet with 'good morrow.' But this play was written in 1598, a year after 'Romeo and Juliet' was published, and four years after the date usually assigned to that tragedy. 'Good morrow' might have become familiar merely by means of 'Romeo and Juliet;' but it does not appear that it had become a necessary or common salutation," etc. And yet again, "It is *certain* that the habit of using forms

of morning and evening salutation was not introduced into England prior to the date of Bacon's notes, 1594."

This is the most amazing assertion, and this the most amazing inference, that exists, to my knowledge, in all English critical literature. If the assertion had been made in connection with another subject, and the inference had been drawn in regard to a point of less general interest than the influence of Bacon or of Shakespeare upon the manners and speech of their time, or even if they had not been here trumpeted so triumphantly as a note of victory, they might well have been passed by in smiling silence. But the circumstances give them an importance not their own; and the confident manner in which they are set forth, with an array of citation that may be mistaken for proof, might mislead many readers whose knowledge of the subject is even less than that which is shown by the enthusiastic and well-read compiler of this volume.

First, the fact asserted is in its very nature so incredible that it could not be received as established upon any merely negative evidence. That any civilized, or half-civilized, people of the Indo-European race should have existed in the sixteenth century without customary salutation and valediction at morning and evening could not be believed, upon the mere absence of such phrases in their literature. Such absence, if it existed, would have to be accounted for upon some other supposition. This is one of those cases in which reasoning *a priori* is of more weight than negative evidence. A society so beyond civility as to be without forms of salutation would be one in which neither a Bacon nor a Shakespeare would be possible.

Leaving this point without further remark, it is to be said simply that the assertion is absolutely untrue; and with the assertion goes, of course, the inference drawn from it. The fair advocate of Bacon herself furnishes evidence against it. For she is very candid; and indeed, were her knowledge and her critical ability only equal to her candor and her industry, she would have produced a very valuable and interesting work, or — none at all. She has painfully searched an incredible number of books of the Elizabethan and post-Elizabethan period, for the purpose of illustrating and maintaining her thesis, and has even catalogued the results of her examination. Hence, alone, her careful readers are able to see, even if they did not know it before, that such forms as "good morrow," "good night," "good bye," and the like, are used by these writers of that time: Gascoigne, Stubbs, Ben Jonson, Fletcher, Beaumont, and Heywood; all of them men who wrote between 1580 and 1620; and to these there might be numerous additions. Is it to be believed that these writers put into the mouths of their personages phrases of this nature which were not in common colloquial use? But we are told that people began suddenly, and all at once, to say "good morrow," and the like, to each other, because Francis Bacon had elaborated those phrases in his "Promus," and introduced them in *his* "Romeo and Juliet" to the English people. Bacon is made equivalent to the hunger which "*expedivit* [Persius's] *psittaco suum* χαιρε." Will any one not bitten and mad with the Bacon-Shakespeare *œstrum* believe this, or pause for one moment in doubt over its preposterous incredibility? But even our Bacon enthusiast is, in candor, obliged to confess one fact which is mortal to the theory which

she has undertaken to maintain. We are told in a footnote, and in one of the appendices, that since the volume was compiled its editress, or some one for her, has discovered that the salutation "good morrow" occurs in the dialogue of John Bon and Master Person [parson], which was printed in 1548, nearly half a century before Bacon jotted down his "Promus," and, what is something to the purpose, thirteen years before he was born: —

The Parson. What, John Bon! Good morrowe to thee!
John Bon. Nowe good morrowe, Mast. Person, so mut I thee.[1]

The fact that Gascoigne had written in 1557, before Bacon was born, two poems, "Good Morrow" and "Good Night," had been set aside, or "got over," by the astonishing plea that these were only titles, and not colloquial uses of these phrases! (But if they were not known as salutations, with what propriety were they used as titles?) And as to John Bon and Master Person, there is a despairing attempt to show that "good morrow" was not a morning salutation, and that "the first use for that purpose seems to be in 'Romeo and Juliet.'" Great Phœbus, god of the morning! For what, then, was "good morrow" used? Surely, the force of self-delusion could no further go.

To have given so much time to the examination of this frantic fancy would have been more than wasteful, were it not that within its petty convolutions is involved another, which is of as much importance as anything can be that is connected with this subject. It is fortunate, *ad hoc*, that the point was made; for it is fatal to the whole bearing of this "Promus" upon the Bacon theory of the Shakespeare plays. It is so

[1] "So mut [or mote] I thee" = so might I thrive; so may I prosper.

because we have, according to the Bacon-saving-Shakespeare folk themselves, Bacon's own testimony that English people, of all sorts and conditions, were in the constant habit of using salutations, particularly in the morning.

In the Second Part of "King Henry VI.," Act III. Sc. 1, is the following passage: —

> *Queen.* We know the time since he was mild and affable,
> And if we did but glance a far-off look,
> Immediately he was upon his knee,
> That all the court admir'd him for submission.
> But meet him now, and be it *in the morn*,
> *When every one will give the time of day*,
> He knits his brows and shows an angry eye,
> And passeth by, etc.

The bearing of this passage is such, it is so broad, so clear, so direct, and its testimony comes from such a quarter, that it might be well to leave the point upon which it touches without another word of remark; but it may also be well to set forth its full importance and significance. It will be seen that here, according to those who proclaim that Bacon is Shakespeare, and that they are his prophets, Bacon himself declares that at the time when *he* wrote this passage "every one" in England said "good morning:" that it was recognized as so general and absolute a requirement of good manners that the omission of it gave occasion for censure. Now this passage, although it is found in the Second Part of "King Henry VI.," appears originally, word for word, in a play of which Bacon (or, as some un-illuminated people believe, Shakespeare) was one of the writers, called "The First Part of the Contention of the Two Noble Houses of York and Lancaster," which was worked over into the "Henry VI." play, and which must have been in existence in the year 1591, as it is referred to in a book published in 1592. Whence we

see that this declaration of Bacon the playwright as to giving the time of day "in the morn" by "every one" antedates the memorandum of Bacon the "Promus" writer at least three years. According, therefore, to people with whose fancies we are now dealing seriously, Bacon himself tells us that he did *not* teach the people of England to bid each other good morrow by writing "Romeo and Juliet;" and perhaps even they — the Bacon-Shakespeare folk — are now beginning to suspect that the writer of "John Bon and Master Person" and the poet Gascoigne, when they used "good morrow" and "good night," were simply repeating phrases which were even commoner than mere household words, and had been so in England for centuries.

And yet again, this passage, which appears in "The First Part of the Contention" and in the Second Part of "King Henry VI.," is one of those as to the authorship of which there is no doubt. Whatever his name was, the writer of it was the writer of the Shakespeare plays. Whoever wrote that passage wrote also "As You Like It," "Hamlet," "King Lear," and "Othello," and the rest. And this man, as we have seen, was not the one who felt it necessary to potter over a "Promus" of elegancies in salutation to justify him in the use of "good morrow." For, moreover, this man had used this phrase in at least five plays which preceded the "Promus" and "Romeo and Juliet." It occurs (as any one may see by referring to Mrs. Clarke's Concordance) in "Love's Labour's Lost," "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," "Titus Andronicus," "King Richard III.," and "A Midsummer-Night's Dream," all of which are earlier than "Romeo and Juliet," as it should seem that any person who

ventured to write upon this subject would know.[1] That "Romeo and Juliet" brought "good morrow" into use in England as a morning salutation is impossible; the notion that any writer brought it into use in the reign of Elizabeth, or within centuries of that reign, is, to any person competent to have an opinion upon the subject, ridiculously absurd.

We have, however, not yet seen the extreme of the ignorance which is displayed in this attempt to show that the writer of the "Promus" was also the writer of "Romeo and Juliet." In this folio (111) of the "Promus," memorandum 1200 is "romē;" upon which we find the following comment in the Introductory Essay to this volume: —

"One can scarcely avoid imagining that the solitary word 'romē,' which is entered six notes (44) farther on in the 'Promus' with a mark of abbreviation over the *e*, may have been a hint for the name of the bridegroom himself. It has been suggested that 'romē' may be intended for the Greek word ῥώμη = *strength*, and that the mark may denote that the vowel (*e*) is long in quantity. The objection to this suggestion is that Bacon frequently uses a mark of abbreviation, whilst in no other Greek word does he take any heed of quantity; but were it so, it would not ex-

[1] What rashness may, and generally does, accompany the effort to transmute Shakespeare into Bacon is shown here in regard to this very question of the date of the production of *Romeo and Juliet*. It is remarked in the Introductory Essay (page 68), "The publication of *Romeo and Juliet* is fixed at 1597, and its composition has been usually ascribed to 1594–5. . . . Recently, however, Dr. Delius has proposed the date 1592 for the composition of *Romeo and Juliet*, on the ground that a certain earthquake which took place in 1580 is alluded to by the Nurse (I. iii.) as having happened eleven years ago." Wonderful discovery on the part of the German doctor! Wonderful discovery of the German doctor by our editress! This point as to the bearing of the Nurse's earthquake on the date of the play was made by Tyrwhitt *more than a hundred years ago*, and has been discussed by every considerable editor since. The notes upon it in Furness's variorum edition of *Romeo and Juliet* fill two pages. Proposed by Dr. Delius! But if English-speaking folk will run after strange High German gods they cannot complain if they are led into trouble.

tinguish the possibility that the word may have been intended as a hint for the name of Romeo, alluding perhaps to the strength of the love which is alluded to in the following passages," etc.

If what we have seen before is amazing, the gravity of this is astounding. A hint for the name of the bridegroom! An allusion in Greek to the strength of his passion! Why, who that has the slightest and most superficial acquaintance with the origin of Shakespeare's plays does not know that the name of the bridegroom in this tragedy was furnished by the old poem, of which it is a mere dramatization, — a poem familiar to the people of London for years before the tragedy was produced, or the "Promus" memorandums written, — and that it came into that poem from a story which had been told and retold by various writers for generations? The "name of the bridegroom" was settled in Italy, centuries before Bacon or Shakespeare could write it. The writer of the tragedy took all its principal personages, and their names with them, from the old poem, and he would not have thought of such a thing as changing the name of its hero. He chose his plot *because* it was that of the old popular story of the sad fate of the two lovers, — Romeo of the Montagues and Juliet of the Capulets, — with which he wished to please his audience by putting it before them in a dramatic form. There was no occasion for a hint as to the name of the bridegroom; he had been baptized long before.

It seems very strange to be obliged to treat such fancies even with a semblance of respect; but these are characteristic of the methods by which this foolish fuss is kept up and is pressed upon the attention of the uninformed, or the more easily deceived, half-informed, as if it were a serious literary question.

As to this "Promus" memorandum "romē," if it has any connection with "Romeo and Juliet," which is not at all probable, it may possibly be of this nature: The Italian pronunciation of Romeo is *Romēo;* but Brooke, in his poem "Romeus and Juliet," published in 1562 (and consequently Shakespeare in his tragedy), accented it upon the first syllable, whether in the Latin or the Italian form, as will appear by the following passage: —

> Fayre Juliet tourned to her chayre with plesaunt cheere,
> And glad she was her Romeus approched was so neere.
> At thone side of her chayre her lover Romeo
> And on the other syde there sat one cald Mercutio.

The distortions of proper names, in this manner, by English writers of the Elizabethan period are monstrous and ridiculous. For example, Robert Greene, a university scholar, not only deprives poor Iphigenia entirely of the *ei* in her name, Ιφιγηνεια, but actually pronounces it *If-fij-in-ay:* —

> You 'll curse the hour wherein you did denay
> To join Alphonsus with Iphigena.
> . . . . . .
> And so by marriage of Iphigena
> You soon shall drive the danger clear away.
>
> Alphonsus, Act III.

Now it is just not impossible that Bacon, having read Brooke's poem, or seen Shakespeare's play, made a memorandum, imperfect and obscure, as to either the proper pronunciation, or the customary English mispronunciation of the *e* in *Romeo;* but, nevertheless, we may be pretty sure that his "romē" had no more to do with *Romeo* than his "good morrow" with the appearance of that phrase in Shakespeare's plays, or its use by English people.

To one stumbling-block in the path of the Bacon-Shakespeare theorists they seem to be quite blind, — the "Sonnets." They busy themselves with Bacon's writings, with the plays, and the concordance; and with their eyes fixed upon the one point which they hope to attain, these headlong literary steeple-chasers, with their noses in the air, look right over this obstacle, which is one of many, each one of which would bring them to the ground. They have little to say about it; and what they do say is not all to the purpose. If there is one fact in literary history which, upon moral grounds, and upon internal and external evidence, is as certain as any recorded fact in general history, or as any demonstrated mathematical proposition, it is that the writer of the plays was also the writer of the sonnets, both of which bear the name of Shakespeare. In spirit, in manner, and in the use of language, their likeness is so absolute that if either one of the two groups had been published anonymously, there would have been no room for doubt that it was by the writer of the other. Now the sonnets, or a considerable number of them, had been written before the year 1597; for, as all students of the literature of the period know, they are mentioned by Francis Meres in his "Palladis Tamia," which was published in 1598. They were not then published; they were not written for the public, as Meres tells us; they were not printed until eleven years afterwards, when they were procured for publication in some surreptitious or *quasi*-surreptitious way. Meres mentions them as Shakespeare's "sugred sonnets among his private friends." Now, if Bacon wrote the plays, he also wrote the sonnets: and consequently we must believe that the lawyer, philosopher, and

statesman, who at twenty-six years of age had planned his great system of inductive investigation, who never took his eye from that grand purpose, who was struggling with unpropitious fortune, who was a ceaseless place-hunter, who had difficulty in procuring the means of living in modest conformity to his position as a gentleman of good birth and high connection, who was a hard-working barrister conducting great public as well as private causes, an active member of Parliament and a scheming, if not an intriguing, courtier, occupied himself, not only in writing plays, for which he might have got a little (for one like him a very little) money, but in writing fanciful sonnets, — not an occasional sonnet or two, but one hundred and fifty-four sonnets, more than Wordsworth bestowed upon the world, — which were not to be published or put to any profitable use, but which he gave to an actor, to be handed about as his own among his private friends, for their delectation and his own glory. This Bacon did, or he did not write the plays. That he did so is morally impossible; and indeed the supposition that he could have done so is too monstrously absurd to merit this serious examination of its possibility. Besides all which, there are many of these sonnets, and they by no means the least meritorious or the least characteristic of them, that are of such a nature in their subjects and their language and their allusions that any one at all acquainted with Bacon's tastes or his moral nature would hesitate at accepting them, would revolt from accepting them, as his, even upon positive and direct testimony. Bacon certainly did not write the sonnets; and therefore, as certainly, he did not write the plays. (It shames me to seem to rest such a decision upon a formula of

grave and sober reasoning.) There is no visible avoidance of this conclusion.

And now we are face to face with what is, after all, the great inherent absurdity (as distinguished from evidence and external conditions) of this fantastical notion, — the unlikeness of Bacon's mind and of his style to those of the writer of the plays. Among all the men of that brilliant period who stand forth in the blaze of its light with sufficient distinction for us at this time to know anything of them, no two were so elementally unlike in their mental and moral traits and in their literary habits as Francis Bacon and William Shakespeare; and each of them stamped his individuality unmistakably upon his work. Both were thinkers of the highest order; both, what we somewhat loosely call philosophers: but how different their philosophy, how divergent their ways of thought, and how notably unlike their modes of expression! Bacon, a cautious observer and investigator, ever looking at men and things through the dry light of cool reason; Shakespeare, glowing with instant inspiration, seeing by intuition the thing before him, outside and inside, body and spirit, as it was, yet moulding it as it was to his immediate need, — finding in it merely an occasion of present thought, and regardless of it except as a stimulus to his fancy and his imagination: Bacon, a logician; Shakespeare, one who set logic at naught, and soared upon wings compared with which syllogisms are crutches: Bacon, who sought, in the phrase of Saul of Tarsus, — that Shakespeare of Christianity, — to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good; Shakespeare, one who, like Saul, loosed upon the world winged phrases, but who recked not his own rede, proved nothing, and held fast both

to good and evil, delighting in his Falstaff as much as he delighted in his Imogen: Bacon, in his writing the most self-asserting of men; Shakespeare, one who when he wrote his plays did not seem to have a self: Bacon, the most cautious and painstaking, the most consistent and exact, of writers; Shakespeare, the most heedless, the most inconsistent, the most inexact, of all writers who have risen to fame: Bacon, sweet sometimes, sound always, but dry, stiff, and formal; Shakespeare, unsavory sometimes, but oftenest breathing perfume from Paradise, grand, large, free, flowing, flexible, unconscious, and incapable of formality: Bacon, precise and reserved in expression; Shakespeare, a player and quibbler with words, often swept away by his own verbal conceits into intellectual paradox, and almost into moral obliquity: Bacon, without humor; Shakespeare's smiling lips the mouthpiece of humor for all human kind: Bacon, looking at the world before him and at the teaching of past ages with a single eye to his theories and his individual purposes; Shakespeare, finding in the wisdom and the folly, the woes and the pleasures, of the past and the present merely the means of giving pleasure to others and getting money for himself, and rising to his height as a poet and a moral teacher only by his sensitive intellectual sympathy with all the needs and joys and sorrows of humanity: Bacon, shrinking from a generalization even in morals; Shakespeare, ever moralizing, and dealing even with individual men and particular things in their general relations: both worldly-wise, both men of the world, — for both these master intellects of the Christian era were worldly-minded men in the thorough Bunyan sense of the term: but the one using his knowledge of men and things critically in

philosophy and in affairs; the other, his synthetically, as a creative artist: Bacon, a highly trained mind, and showing his training at every step of his cautious, steady march; Shakespeare, wholly untrained, and showing his want of training even in the highest reach of his soaring flight: Bacon, utterly without the poetic faculty even in a secondary degree, as is most apparent when he desires to show the contrary; Shakespeare, rising with unconscious effort to the highest heaven of poetry ever reached by the human mind. To suppose that one of these men did his own work and also the work of the other is to assume two miracles for the sake of proving one absurdity, and to shrink from accepting in the untaught son of the Stratford yeoman a miraculous miracle, one that does not defy or suspend the laws of nature.

Many readers of these pages probably know that this notion that our Shakespeare, the Shakespeare of "As You Like It" and "Hamlet" and "King Lear," was Francis Bacon masking in the guise of a player at the Globe Theatre is not of very recent origin. It was first brought before the public by Miss Delia Bacon (who afterwards deployed her theory in a ponderous volume, with an introduction by Nathaniel Hawthorne, — who did not advocate it) in an article in "Putnam's Magazine" for January, 1856. Some time before that article was published, and shortly after the publication of "Shakespeare's Scholar," it was sent to me in proof by the late Mr. George P. Putnam, with a letter calling my attention to its importance, and a request that I would write an introduction to it. After reading it carefully and without prejudice (for I knew nothing of the theory, or of its author, and, as I have already said, I am perfectly indifferent as to the

name and the personality of the writer of the plays, and had as lief it should have been Francis Bacon as William Shakespeare) I returned the article to Mr. Putnam, declining the proposed honor of introducing it to the public, and adding that, as the writer was plainly neither a fool nor an ignoramus, she must be insane; not a maniac, but what boys call "loony." So it proved: she died a lunatic, and I believe in a lunatic asylum.

I record this incident for the first time on this occasion, not at all in the spirit of I-told-you-so, but merely as a fitting preliminary to the declaration that this Bacon-Shakespeare notion is an infatuation; a literary bee in the bonnets of certain ladies of both sexes, which should make them the objects of tender care and sympathy. It will not be extinguished at once; on the contrary, it may become a mental epidemic. For there is no notion, no fancy or folly, which may not be developed into a "movement," or even into a "school," by iteration and agitation. I do not despair of seeing a Bacon-Shakespeare Society, with an array of vice-presidents of both sexes, that may make the New Shakspere Society look to its laurels. None the less, however, is it a lunacy, which should be treated with all the the skill and tenderness which modern medical science and humanity have developed. Proper retreats should be provided, and ambulances kept ready, with horses harnessed; and when symptoms of the Bacon-Shakespeare craze manifest themselves, the patient should be immediately carried off to the asylum, furnished with pens, ink, and paper, a copy of Bacon's works, one of the Shakespeare plays, and one of Mrs. Cowden-Clarke's Concordance (and that good lady is largely responsible for the development of this harm-

less mental disease, and other "fads" called Shakespearean); and the literary results, which would be copious, should be received for publication with deferential respect, and then — committed to the flames. In this way the innocent victims of the malady might be soothed and tranquillized, and the world protected against the debilitating influence of tomes of tedious twaddle.

As to treating the question seriously, that is not to be done by men of common sense and moderate knowledge of the subject. Even the present not very serious, or, I fear, sufficiently considerate, examination of it (to which I was not very ready,[1] but much the contrary) provokes me to say almost with Henry Percy's words, that I could divide myself and go to buffets for being moved by such a dish of skimmed milk to so honorable an action. It is as certain that William Shakespeare wrote (after the theatrical fashion and under the theatrical conditions of his day) the plays which bear his name as it is that Francis Bacon wrote the "Novum Organum," the "Advancement of Learning," and the "Essays." We *know* this as well as we know any fact in history. The notion that Bacon also wrote "Titus Andronicus," "The Comedy of Errors," "Hamlet," "King Lear," and "Othello" is not worth five minutes' serious consideration by any reasonable creature.

[1] As the editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* will bear witness.

KING LEAR.[1]

I. THE TEXT.

Mr. Horace Howard Furness — who, although he is doubly a doctor, can afford to be spoken of as if he were only a gentlemen — has added a fourth play and a fifth volume to the new variorum edition of Shakespeare's works which he has begun, and which it is to be hoped that he will have the health, the endurance, and the perseverance to complete. The plays which he has heretofore given us are "Romeo and Juliet," "Macbeth," and "Hamlet." The scale on which he works is so grand that the first and the second of these plays fill, each of them, with their various readings, notes, and commentaries, a large octavo volume, while for "Hamlet" two such volumes are required. The fifth volume, now before us, contains "King Lear."

A variorum edition of a great writer is so called, as most of the readers of these pages probably know, because it presents, with his text, all of the work of his various editors and commentators which in the judgment of the variorum editor is necessary to a critical study of that text, and all the various readings of all previous editions which are of any authority or interest. Thus, as Mr. Furness remarks in his preface to the present volume, "the attempt is

[1] *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare.* Edited by Horace Howard Furness, Ph. D., LL. D. Vol. V. *King Lear.* Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1880.

here made to present on the same page with the text all the various readings of the different editions of 'King Lear,' from the earliest quarto to the latest critical edition of the play, together with all the notes and comments thereon which the editor has thought worthy of preservation, not only for the purpose of elucidating the text, but at times as illustrations of the history of Shakespearean criticism;" and yet to this there are added, in the appendix, essays on the text, on the date of the composition of the play, on the source of the plot, the duration of the action, the insanity of Lear, the great actors of the principal part, and the costume of the play, Tate's version of it, selections from English and German criticisms of it, and its bibliography, — a work the magnitude, we might almost say the enormity, of which can be appreciated only by those who have some practical acquaintance with such labors.

There have been several variorum editions of Shakespeare's plays. Indeed, as every editor has almost of necessity availed himself of the labors of all of his predecessors and quoted them, every amply critical edition has been more or less a variorum; but the only editions which have really this character in any approach to completeness are those known as Johnson and Steevens's, 1785, in ten volumes; Malone's, 1790, in ten volumes; Reid and Steevens's, 1813, in twenty-one volumes; and Boswell's Malone, 1821, also in twenty-one volumes. The great Cambridge edition, by William George Clark and W. Aldis Wright, in nine volumes, is a complete variorum as to readings, but not as to notes and comments. Of these Boswell's Malone is the standard variorum, and is always meant by editors and commentators when they cite "the

Variorum." That of Reid and Steevens is sometimes cited as "the variorum of 1813." But even the former of these does not approach Mr. Furness's work in the vastness of its plan, or in its systematic arrangement, or in the thoroughness of its execution. And the activity of Shakespearean criticism between 1821 and 1880, and the searching and almost scientific study of the English language and its literature during the last twenty-five years, have resulted in the accumulation of a mass of critical material upon this subject since Malone's time which makes a new variorum edition of Shakespeare almost a literary necessity of the day. It is to the honor of the American branch of English literature that the labor of supplying this need has been undertaken by one of our scholars and critics; and still more to its honor that this labor has been performed thus far with the wide range of knowledge, the acumen, the judgment, the taste, and, it may well be added, the invariable good temper which are displayed by Mr. Furness.

To the general reader it may seem that the poet is editorially overlaid in this great edition. The text of "Hamlet" may be printed in large type on sixty or seventy duodecimo pages: and indeed it was originally published in a small quarto pamphlet of that size. In the new variorum, Hamlet fills two ponderous octavo volumes. But it is to be remembered that the purpose of a variorum editor is not to produce a pocket edition of his author for popular use. It is not supposed that any one who wishes to take "Hamlet" with him on a summer excursion will put the new variorum edition into his travelling-bag, — or the old variorum, for that matter. Boswell's Malone's Shakespeare was quite as much overlaid for its time

as Furness's is; and even more, for it was filled with rubbish which subsequent editors have swept into the dust-bin. A variorum edition professes to give what is necessary for the critical study of its author, and even, as Mr. Furness says, to illustrate the history of the critical literature of which he is the source and the subject. The doing of this involves the preservation of much which is, in the judgment of the variorum editor himself, of little intrinsic value.

It is easy to laugh and sneer at the editors and commentators of Shakespeare; and some of them, in their dulness of apprehension no less than in the voluminous superfluity and feeble triviality of their criticism, are indeed "fixed figures for the time of scorn to point his slow unmoving finger at." But not a little of the scoffing to which they as a class have been subjected is the mere effervescence of the ignorance of the scoffers, which with some folk is a very sparkling quality. Many even of those who read and enjoy Shakespeare talk of being content with "the text" itself without note or comment. But what text? Such objections to editorial labor on Shakespeare can be made by candid and intelligent persons only in utter ignorance of the state in which the text of Shakespeare's plays has come down to us. The "text of Shakespeare," when thus spoken of, means merely the text which the speakers have been in the habit of reading. But that very text, they may be sure, is the result of the painful labors, through many generations, of the very editors of whom they speak so slightingly.

Shakespeare did not publish his plays himself and read the proofs with the assistance of a good corrector of the press. Would that he had done so! They

were, some of them, obtained by their first publishers surreptitiously; they were printed from imperfect manuscripts, or from mutilated stage copies; and then they were printed with less care than is now given to the printing of a handbill. The very edition issued by his fellow-actors after his death, the great First Folio, 1623, a perfect copy of which is worth twenty-five hundred dollars and upwards, is incomplete and full of errors. The first edition of "Hamlet," 1603, is in many passages absolutely unreadable, and is in fact an absurd jumble of what Shakespeare wrote. The "authentic" edition of 1623, besides being full of perplexing errors of the press, is very incomplete. If the text of Shakespeare were put before these captious amateur critics uncorrected by editorial labor and without comment, they would not recognize many parts of it; they would not believe that it was "Shakespeare," — and they would be right; and besides this, in numberless passages in which they would really have "Shakespeare" they would be unable to understand him.

The truth upon this point is that the text of Shakespeare's plays has come down to us from his own time with such imperfection and such variety of presentation that to form it into a self-consistent whole requires a degree of scholarship and of critical acumen beyond that required by the text of any other great poet of the past, excepting Homer, whose poems lived only in the mouths of rhapsodists and in the memory of hearers for hundreds of years before they were put upon paper. As to Shakespeare's writings, there is such variety of authority in regard to them and the authority is so conflicting in many cases, they are so lame and mutilated in every "authoritative" form, that they are just in the condition to need and to pro-

voke the most careful critical recension of the most capable scholarship. If their condition had been contrived by some malicious spirit for this very purpose, it could not have been better adapted to that end. And then, the writings which exist in this deplorable state are the crown of all literature and the glory of the English race. What wonder that Shakespeare has editors and commentators! That some of these have been men whose feebleness of intellect has been equalled in degree only by their presumption does not essentially affect this question.

Let us look at a few passages of "King Lear" in the light of these remarks, which must seem trite to persons who have a moderate acquaintance at first hand with the subject.

In the very first scene, and in the fifth and sixth lines of that scene, we find this discrepancy between the "authorities." One of them has, "for equalities are so weighed that curiosity in *nature* can make choice of either's moiety;" while the other reads, "that curiosity in *neither* can make choice," etc. Which of these is the text of Shakespeare? The latter, which is the reading of the folio of 1623, has been generally and finally accepted; but much might be said in favor of "curiosity in nature." And then what does "*curiosity* in neither" mean? It might puzzle some of the carpers at Shakespearean editing to tell. This, merely by way of showing how soon we come upon a stumbling-block in "the text of Shakespeare." And it may be not without interest to my readers for me to point out what I believe to be the origin of this particular variation between the texts of the two old editions, which has never been done — an omission that seems remarkable. It is due, I am sure, to what is called a misprint by the ear.

Except in extraordinary cases, compositors put words in type, not letters; and a skilful and practised compositor will sometimes set up a phrase of a dozen words, or of a score, without referring to his copy. Manifestly, therefore, he spells with his type the *sound* that he has in his mind. Now in Shakespeare's time the sounds of *nature* and *neither* were almost identical. The first syllable of *neither* was pronounced *nay*, and *th* had the sound of *dth* (and sometimes even of *d* and *t*), as we now hear it sounded by Irish speakers of English.[1] Whether, therefore, the compositor in this instance had *nature* or *neither* before his eyes, he had in his mind's ear the one, or nearly one, sound with which an Irishman utters both words. This cause of confusion was aggravated, if the text of the quarto in which "nature" appears was taken down, as it may have been, from a recital of the scene. Misprints and miswritings by the ear were the cause of not a little confusion in the old texts of Shakespeare.

And what does Regan mean when, according to the text of 1623, which Mr. Furness adopts, she says to her father,

> I profess
> Myself an enemy to all other joys
> Which the most precious square of sense professes.
> Act I. Sc. 1.

What is a precious square? What is a square of sense? How can a square of sense profess? As to the last point, it seems to me clear that the text of the folio of 1623 here furnishes an example of another sort of misprint, — the misprint by repetition. If a

[1] See my "Memorandums of English Pronunciation in the Elizabethan Era," vol. xii. of my first edition of Shakespeare; also the "Irish Pronunciation" in chap. V. of *Every-Day English*, published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

man has spoken or written a word once, such is the action of the mind that he is likely, even without reason, to repeat it; and this likelihood is much greater if the word is suggested by kindred thought or a like form in another word. Hence compositors sometimes repeat words which they have just put in type; and hence in this case I am sure the compositor repeated *profess*, although he had *possesses* before his eyes. The quarto has, "Which the most precious square of sense *possesses*." But this still leaves us with the precious square of sense upon our hands. What can it mean? Let us see how some of the ablest of Shakespeare's editors and commentators have explained it.

Warburton said that "*square* of sense" refers to "the *four* nobler senses, sight, hearing, taste, and smell." Dr. Johnson said, "Perhaps *square* means only compass, comprehension." Hudson accepts the whole phrase as meaning "fullness or wealth of sensibility or capacity of joy." Aldis Wright's explanation is "that which the most delicately sensitive point of my nature is capable of enjoying." The erudite German scholar, Dr. Schmidt, who has undertaken to instruct us in the meaning of Shakespeare's words, says that the phrase means "choicest symmetry of reason, the most normal and intelligent mode of thinking;" thus producing the most extravagant and far-fetched and would-be-profound-seeming of all these somewhat oversubtle and very unlike explanations. Certainly the variety of sense extracted from these four words is remarkable. But does any one of these paraphrases satisfy the intelligent Shakespeare lover whose mind is clear and unmuddled by the study of various readings, — the most distracting and bewildering of all mental occupations, one which I sometimes think (and

perhaps my readers may think) tends to idiocy? I will venture to say that it does not. Hence it has been supposed to be corrupted, and "precious *sphere* of sense," "*spacious sphere* of sense," "*spacious* square of sense," and even "precious *treasure* of sense" have been proposed as readings. I fear that it must be left as it stands, with the humble confession that it is a dark saying.

And what are we to make of Cordelia's entreaty to her father when she says, according to both the old authorities,

> I yet beseech your majesty, —
> . . . . . .
> — that you make known
> It is no vicious blot, murther, or foulness,
> No unchaste action or dishonour'd step,
> That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour.
>
> Act I. Sc. 1.

Were young princesses then so apt to commit murder that it was enumerated as a matter of course among the slips to which they were liable? Or was the gentle, loving, self-sacrificing Cordelia an exception in this respect in the eyes of her doting father — a murderess by distinction? The case is very perplexing. Hence the corrector of the Collier folio read "no vicious blot *nor other* foulness," Mr. Collier remarking that "the copyist or the compositor miswrote or misread *no other* 'murther;'" and the change was accepted by some editors with great expression of relief and satisfaction. Walker, that much overrated commentator, — overrated because of the impression which a formal, systematic arrangement produces on many minds, — declared without hesitation that we should read, "It is no vicious blot, *umber*, or foulness;" an emendation so feeble, far-fetched, and foolish that it might have been made by Zachary Jackson. Keight-

ly would read, "no vicious blot, *misdeed*, or foulness," which is well enough in itself; but why not read anything else with an *m* in it as well as *misdeed?* Against the Collier reading "nor other foulness," it is to be objected, first, that the suggestion of a misprint of *murther* for *no other*, although plausible as to the folio, does not touch the quarto, where we not only also have *murder*, but find it spelled with a *d;* next, and more important, *vicious blot* and *foulness* are so nearly the same in meaning, so absolutely the same in turpitude, that even a writer far inferior to Shakespeare would not make the latter alternative to the former. But finally comes Hudson, and says with that fine insight which he often shows, "I suspect that Cordelia purposely uses *murder* out of place, as a glance at the hyperbolical absurdity of denouncing her as 'a wretch whom nature is ashamed to acknowledge.'" Cordelia has a touch of demure satire in her composition, and this is the only explanation which seems to me at all suitable, although I cannot regard it as satisfactory.

In the second scene of Act II., Kent, according to the earliest authority, the quarto, says of Oswald, the fopling villain whom he instinctively so hates, —

> Such smiling rogues as these,
> Like rats, oft bite the holy cords a-twain
> Which are too *intrench* t' unloose;

but the folio reads, "Which are t' *intrence* t' unloose." Which is the text of Shakespeare, and what does either reading mean? No one could answer either question until it occurred to a learned and acute commentator of the last century, named Upton, that *intrence* of the folio was a misprint for *intrinse*, a short form of *intrinsecate*, like *reverb* for *reverberate; in-*

trinsecate being an Anglicized form of the Italian *intrinsecare*, to entangle, which was used by a few writers of the Elizabethan age. And here again I suggest, and indeed am sure, that we have an example of the misleading influence of pronunciation upon the printer's art. For the *intrench* of the quarto is merely a phonetic spelling of *intrinse*.[1] We have still a remnant of this pronunciation. Not uncommonly provincial people, and Mr. Lincoln's "plain people," talk of "renching [for rinsing] clothes," or say "rench [for rinse] those glasses." Just so *intrinse* was pronounced *intrench*. The pronunciation *rench* for *rinse* is but the survival of an old fashion. As to the word *intrinse*, it means merely entangled, knotted; but what would have become of this passage were it not for Shakespearean editors?

Lear, consciously deceiving himself, I think (I can indicate his state of mind with brevity no otherwise), says to Regan, when, cursing Goneril, he flies to his second daughter, —

> No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse.
> Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
> Thee o'er to harshness.
>
> Act II. Sc. 4.

This is the folio reading; the quarto reading in the second line is "tender-*hested*." The word is spelled with the old-fashioned long *ſ*, which might easily be a misprint for *f*; but it is to be remarked that both of the quarto impressions, although they differ here typographically, have "tender-*hested*." In any case, however, what will the advocate of an unedited text of Shakespeare do here? Is either reading "the text of Shakespeare"? What does either a tender-hefted nature or a tender-hested nature mean? It is said

[1] See "Memorandums," etc., before cited, under *S*, which was often pronounced *sh*.

that as *heft* means handle, tender-hefted "means smooth or soft handled, and is here put for gentleness of disposition." Another explanation is that tender-hefted means "delicately housed, daintily bodied, finely sheathed." The latter is given in the "Edinburgh Review," and also by Aldis Wright, the Cambridge editor, who adds, "Regan was less masculine than Goneril." Was she? She assists at the most frightful and revolting scene in all tragedy, — introduced by Shakespeare, I believe, partly to show the savage nature of the times he was depicting, — the tearing out of Gloucester's eyes; and she, with her own "tender-hefted" hand, kills the servant who assists her husband in the act. She seems to me rather the worse of the two elder sisters. But whether she is so or not, can we accept any one of these explanations of this strange compound word? I think that they are all not only much too far-fetched, but entirely from the purpose. Rowe, Shakespeare's first editor, read "tender-*hearted* nature," a very plausible emendation, which other editors have adopted. But how came this simple and hardly-to-be-mistaken phrase to be misprinted in both the old impressions, which were separated by a space of fifteen years, and which were put in type from different "copy"? This question is one of a sort that Shakespeare's editors have not unfrequently to pass upon. "Tender-hefted" is inexplicable consistently with common sense and Shakespeare's use of language. "Tender-hearted" is inadmissible against the reading of both quarto and folio. After all, is it not the *f* in the folio that is the misprint, and is not the quarto right? Did not Shakespeare write tender-hested nature; that is, tenderly commanded, tenderly ruled, tenderly ordered nature? If he did not, I, for

one, give up the passage as inexplicable and hopelessly corrupt.

When Regan urges Lear to return to Goneril and live with her with half his stipulated train, he breaks out, —

> Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd!
> No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
> To wage against the enmity o' th' air,
> To be a comrade with the wolf and owl, —
> Necessity's sharp pinch. Return with her?

The old copies agree in this reading. The meaning of the phrase "necessity's sharp pinch" is plain enough; but what does *Lear* imply in it? What is its connection? The Collier folio has "and *howl* necessity's sharp pinch," which I am sorry to see that Mr. Furness adopts. Lear surely did not mean to speak of howling the sharp pinch of necessity. The first line of Regan's speech, to which this of Lear is a reply, seems to make the passage clear. She says to him, —

> "I pray you, father, being weak, seem so;"

that is, submit to the hard necessity of your condition. To this Lear, choleric, proud, and kingly, replies, [Shall I yield to] necessity's sharp pinch [and] return with her! The phrase is merely an elliptical interrogative exclamation. It seems to me that to a reader who is in sympathy with the scene it hardly needs explanation, and that the Collier folio reading is insufferable.

But I must bring this consideration of particular passages to a close; and I shall remark upon only one more, which, as it stands in both the quarto impressions and in all subsequent editions, is certainly one of the most incomprehensible in all Shakespeare's plays. In the scene in which Gloucester loses his eyes, he, referring to the driving of old Lear out into the

storm, says boldly to Regan, as the passage appears in the quartos, in the variorum of 1821, in the Cambridge edition, in the Globe, and my own: —

> If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time
> Thou shouldst have said: "Good porter, turn the key."
> All cruels else subscrib'd: but I shall see
> The winged vengeance overtake such children.
>
> Act III. Sc. 7.

The folio has, "All cruels else *subscribe*." But whether we read *subscribe* or *subscribed*, what is the meaning of this phrase? Its obscurity is so great that the notes upon it fill, in small type, the whole of one of Mr. Furness's ample pages. How it was that I came to pass it without remark in my first edition I cannot undertake to say. It was a strange oversight. Dr. Johnson says that *subscrib'd* means "yielded, submitted to the necessity of the occasion;" but what help does that give? Aldis Wright says that "all cruels else subscrib'd" means "all other cruelties being yielded or forgiven." Moberly, the able editor of the Rugby edition, says that it means "all harshness, otherwise natural, being forborne or yielded from the necessity of the case." Schmidt, whom it is the fashion now to regard as an "authority" of weight on Shakespeare's words, because he has made an alphabetical catalogue of them with explanations, says, "'All cruels' can mean nothing else but all cruel creatures," and that the passage means, "everything which is at other times cruel shows feeling or regard; you alone have not done so." Mr. Furness, in desperation, it would seem, makes this phrase a part of the supposed instructions to the porter, and reads, —

> Thou shouldst have said: "Good porter, turn the key,
> All cruels else subscribe." But I shall see, etc.

with this paraphrase: "Thou shouldst have said, 'Good

porter, open the gates; acknowledge the claims of all creatures, however cruel they may be at other times.'"

It is not necessary to quote or to remark upon any other of the explanations; and I feel that I cannot err in saying that none of these is at all satisfactory, and that among them Schmidt's is the least acceptable. But it seems to me also that after all there is little difficulty in the passage, except in the word "cruels," and that that is far from being inexplicable. It means, I believe, all cruelties, all occasions of cruelty, — a use of language quite in Shakespeare's manner. The folio gives the true reading with the proper punctuation according to the fashion of the time. There is a full stop after "Good porter turn the key," and a colon after "subscribe," thus: —

> Thou shoudst have said, Good Porter turne the key.
> All Cruels else subscribe: but I shall see
> The winged Vengeance overtake such Children.

Now in such passages in old books a colon has the power which in more modern punctuation is expressed by a comma, and merely marks off the subject of an assertion. "Subscribe" is here used in the sense of attest, guaranty, a use common with Shakespeare, and not uncommon nowadays, and *but* in a sense which it also has at present, — that. The construction of the passage (which really should not require all this explanation) is, then, this: After Gloucester has told Regan that she should have told the porter to open the door, he utters the solemn asseveration, — All other such cruelties attest, that I shall see swift vengeance overtake such children. So Albany says —

> This shows you are above,
> You justicers, that these our nether crimes,
> So speedily can venge.
>
> Act IV. Sc. 2.

Let the passage be printed just as it is in the folio, with the mere (and usual) substitution of a comma for the old colon: —

> Thou shouldst have said, Good porter turn the key.
> All cruels else subscribe, but I shall see
> The winged vengeance overtake such children.

Mr. Furness's perception of the supreme difficulty of this passage as it is usually printed is only an indication of his fitness for the great work that he has undertaken. In his apprehension of Shakespeare's thought he shows generally that combination of sensitiveness and common sense which goes to the making of a first-rate editor of a great poet, and which most of all is required in the editor of Shakespeare. Dyce, for example, had great learning and good judgment; but he lacked that power of apprehension which comes from a condition of the mind sympathetic with the moods of a great poet, and consequently, with all his learning and his ability, he produced a second or third rate critical edition of this author.

I hope that in quoting several notes upon the passage,

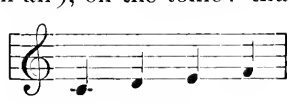
> Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
> More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child
> Than the sea monster!
>
> Act I. Sc. 4.

the object of which is to show what particular swimming beast the sea monster is, Mr. Furness was, as he says in his preface, merely illustrating the history of Shakespearean criticism. For surely never was critical conjecture more wasted than in attempting to remove the vagueness of that image by giving the sea monster a specific name. For vagueness not only excites terror, but enhances horror, and is indeed a constant element in the awful, and in all the exciting

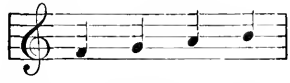
causes of the great apprehensive emotions. To give Lear's sea monster a name and a form is to drag him down from the higher regions of poetry into the plain prose of natural history. He becomes at once a possible inmate of an aquarium, or an item in the Greatest Show on Earth. Who thanks Upton for suggesting that Shakespeare made Lear compare ingratitude to a "hippopotamus," or another commentator for deciding sagely that it was "a whale" that Shakespeare had in mind? Hudson objects that a hippopotamus is not a sea monster, but a river monster (indeed, have we not the famous showman's assurance that the name "is derived from *hippo*, a river, and *potamos*, a horse"?), and he might have added with equal propriety that a whale, although it is the largest of postdiluvian animals, is not at all hideous. But, O gentle critic, it is not because the hippopotamus is a river haunter, or because the whale is not repulsive, that these suggestions are injurious to the passage, but because they belittle it. You do, as might be expected of you, much better when you say, "If the poet had any particular animal in view, I suspect it was the one that behaved so ungently at old Troy." For what was that particular Trojan animal? The poets did not know themselves any more than Shakespeare did. It was simply a sea monster. Your "if" is a very potent and pertinent little word. Shakespeare, be sure, had no particular animal even in his own mind's eye. The sea has always been in the popular mind the home of monsters, huge, horrible, shapeless, pitiless, insatiable; and to excite the vague dread which is born of ignorance and fancy was the poet's purpose. His end was mystery; why endeavor to reduce his mystery to certainty? Must we in all things be so "scientific"

as to substitute positive knowledge for an undefined loathing? Must we classify and pigeon-hole the very causes of our emotions?

The poet worked in a way directly converse to this, having a directly opposite end in view, when he made Edmund (Act I. Sc. 2) say, "My cue is villanous melancholy," etc., and end his speech, "*fa*, *sol*, *la*, *mi*." It has been pointed out by two musicians, who are among Shakespeare's commentators, that this succession of notes is "unnatural and offensive" and "distracting." But Aldis Wright says that Mr. Chappell informed him that "there is not the slightest foundation" for this view of the passage, and that "Edmund is merely singing to himself, in order to seem not to observe Edgar's approach." Mr. Chappell is a very accomplished musician; and he is none the less so because he has, in my judgment, misapprehended this passage. True, a desire to seem not to observe Edgar's approach is the *occasion* of his singing to himself; but why does he sing as he does? Why does he not begin, as a singer naturally would (not singing an air), on the tonic? thus,



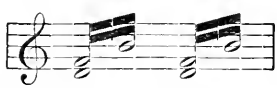
The notes which he sings are these: —



Now to any musical ear this succession of notes suggests a discord that must be resolved by the chord of the tonic: —

This resolution would have been implied if Edmund had gone on, as he naturally would have done, and sung *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *mi*, *fa* : —

But, beginning on the sub-dominant, he stops short of the tonic upon the leading note of the scale ; and this when he has just said, "These eclipses do portend these divisions," — *divisions* being used in a double sense, that of distraction, and the musical sense — in which Shakespeare often uses it — of a rapid succession of notes. Surely it could not have been by chance that Shakespeare, a musician, did this. It is as if this chord



were played and not resolved ; a discipline to which Mr. Chappell, because he is an accomplished musician, would, I suspect, not like to be subjected.

In a speech of Gloucester's, the close of which has already been commented upon, he, speaking of the storm which plays such an important part in this tragedy that it may almost be numbered among the *dramatis personæ*, says of it, —

> The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
> In hell-black night endur'd, would have buoy'd up,
> And quench'd the stelled fires.
>
> Act III. Sc. 7.

This is the reading of the folio and of the quartos ; but is "buoy'd up" to be accepted without question? Mr. Furness and all the best editors leave it undisturbed ; but in both the Collier folio and the Quincy folio "*buoy'd* up" is changed to "*boil'd* up." Heath,

who is among the good Shakespeare commentators, says that *buoyed* is "used here as the middle voice in Greek, signifying to buoy or lift itself up;" and if the word is to be retained this doubtless is the sense in which it must be taken. But Schmidt takes exactly the opposite view of the word, and says that the verb is "used here *transitively*, and the phrase means, the sea would have lifted up the fixed fires and extinguished them." Now *buoy* is a strange word. It has come to mean in English just what it does not mean etymologically. A buoy (Dutch *boei*) is a chain, a fetter; and a buoy is so called not because it floats, but because it is chained to its place. But because it does float its name has been understood and used to mean a float, and has also been made a verb meaning to float or lift up; and *buoyant*, instead of meaning chained down, as by rights it should, has come to mean light and ready to move freely about and above. I 'll warrant that many persons have thought that *buoyant* in its very sound suggested lightness and mobility, and that there was some connection between this and its meaning. Such notions are generally mere fancies. The word came into the English language, with other of our maritime phrases, in the sixteenth century. But did the change in its meaning take place so early as the sixteenth century, or even as the early part of the seventeenth century, when "King Lear" was written? I doubt that it did. I doubt that any evidence can be produced even that *buoy* was used as a verb at all at that period. None, at least, has been recorded in any publication known to me. We have it as a noun, meaning a fixed mark upon the water, but with no other meaning. These facts point to the improbability of the word's being

used in the extraordinary sense in which it must be used in this passage, and give a seeming strong support to the reading "would have *boil'd* up," which presents a natural, although a hyperbolical, picture of the foaming sea raised as high as heaven by the storm.

But there is one consideration that destroys the force of all these facts. It is this: that *buoy*, being unknown as a verb in Shakespeare's time, *buoyed* could not have been put in type by a compositor, or written by a copyist, who had *boiled* before his eyes. Neither would or could thus have changed a well-known word into one that was unknown. The very fact that *buoy* as a verb was unknown, or almost unknown, in Shakespeare's time shows that Shakespeare must have written *buoyed*. Besides, it would be like a poet, and like Shakespeare among poets, to see in a buoy not its fixed position, but its floating and apparently self-sustaining power. If, therefore, it was, as I am inclined to think it will be found to be, that Shakespeare, in his free and no-verbal-critic-fearing use of language, was the first to make *buoy* a verb, his use of it as a reciprocal verb, making the sea buoy up (Heath's middle voice), is explained. He was not using a word which already had an established meaning. The old reading "would have buoy'd up" must be retained, with the sense that the sea rose so high that it would have extinguished the stars. For Schmidt's notion that it buoyed up the stars and also put them out is not only absurd in itself, but lacks support in the sense in which the word was used in Shakespeare's day.

The remarks made above upon the influence of the pronunciation of Sh kespeare's time upon his text lead to some others upon the same subject. First, this

play which we call "King *Leer*" was known to Shakespeare and his contemporaries as "King *Lare*." This is not only certain from the general pronunciation of the combination *ea* as *ay* at that time,[1] but from the spelling of the name in the old play which preceded Shakespeare's, and in the old chronicles in prose and in verse. This is invariably *Leir;* and the combination *ei* then indicated the same sound which it still indicates in *weight*, *freight*, *obeisance*, etc.

One of the Fool's little rhyming speeches is remarkable on the score of pronunciation: —

Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry and take the Fool with thee.
A fox, when one has caught her,
And such a daughter,
Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter:
So the fool follows after.

Act I. Sc. 4.

As to the rhymes of the first three lines, there is of course no difficulty; and when it is taken into consideration that the *l* in such words as *halter*, *falter*, *falcon*, etc., was silent in Shakespeare's time,[2] almost the whole of the apparent difficulty has disappeared. For no one at all familiar with the rustic, that is the old-fashioned, pronunciation of *daughter*, *slaughter*, and *after* will then fail to see that the Fool pronounced these rhyming words thus: —

A fox, when one has *cart her*,
And such a *darter*,
Should sure to the *slarter*,
If my cap would buy a *harter:*
So the fool follows *arter*.

Upon the passage usually printed, —

Half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire, — dreadful trade!

Act IV. Sc. 6.

[1] See the "Memorandums," etc., cited above.
[2] See Chapter XV. in *Every-Day English*.

Mr. Furness has a sound and sensible note. The old copies spell "samphire" *sampire*, and Mr. Furness says, "I think that the old spelling should be retained; it shows the old pronunciation and the derivation; thus spelled, and pronounced *sampeer*, all who are familiar with the sandy beaches of New Jersey will recognize in it an old friend." He is right beyond a doubt.

That Shakespeare wrote the rhyming speech of the Fool remarked upon just above I am not sure. It is not at all equal to the other rhymes vented by the same personage in the same scene; and not only so, it is of a different sort. A similar speech, unquotable here, of this wonderful personage, at the end of the first act, has been under the gravest suspicion as to its authenticity since Steevens's time. I expressed the opinion, in my own edition, that the Merlin prophecy uttered by the Fool at the end of the second scene of Act III. is also spurious, and gave my reasons therefor. Critical opinion seems to be settling itself in favor of this view of the passage.

The Cambridge editors (Clark and Aldis Wright) throw suspicion also upon the soliloquy beginning, —

> When we our betters see bearing our woes,

with which Edgar closes the sixth scene of Act III. They say, referring to its having been retained by all previous editors, "In deference to this consensus of authority we have retained it, though, as it seems to us, internal evidence is conclusive against the supposition that the lines were written by Shakespeare."

It is in favor of this opinion, and also of a like judgment upon the two passages mentioned before, that in each case the suspected speech comes at the end of a scene, and is spoken by a personage who re-

mains while the others go out. This is just the place in which to look for interpolations. They are, in the first place, easily made in such situations, because the writer of them is freed from the necessity of harmonizing them with anything immediately succeeding; and, next, because of a stage demand for them. For if there is anything dear to an actor's soul it is to be left alone upon the stage to occupy the attention of an already excited audience, and to have the curtain fall or the scene shut upon his soliloquy and his solitary figure. I have no doubt that it was a common thing on the easy-going stage of Shakespeare's time for an actor to beg some one of the many playwrights who were always hanging about the theatres, hungry for shillings and thirsty for sack, to write a few lines for him, — just a little bit for him to close the scene with. Hamlet's instructions to the players show that Shakespeare had suffered in this way, especially at the hands of those who played his Fools.

As to this soliloquy of Edgar's, it must be admitted by every considerate and appreciative reader that both in thought and in rhythm it is wholly unlike the scene which it closes, and, with a few exceptions which I shall point out, unlike the rest of the play. It is hardly more than a succession of almost trite moral reflections put in a sententious form, and written in verse as weak, as constrained, and as formal as that of a French tragedy. I quote it, not only that this may be seen, but for the purposes of a comparison to be made hereafter: —

> When we our betters see bearing our woes,
> We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
> Who alone suffers, suffers most i' th' mind,
> Leaving free things and happy shows behind.
> But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip

When grief hath mates, and bearing, fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now
When that which makes me bend makes the King bow : —
He childed as I father'd! Tom, away!
Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray,
When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,
In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee.
What will hap more to-night, safe 'scape the King!
Lurk, lurk!

Act III. Sc. 6.

What have these piping couplets to do with the grand, deep diapason of the blank verse of King Lear! A reader with an ear and a brain will be likely to say, — Nothing. But let us pause awhile before we make a final decision, and, turning to the first scene, look at a speech of Kent's, who is just banished : —

Fare thee well, king; sith thus thou wilt appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.
The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,
That justly think'st and hast most rightly said.
And your large speeches may your deeds approve
That good effects may spring from words of love.
Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu ;
He 'll shape his old course in a country new.

Act I. Sc. 1.

And these prim platitudes are uttered by the man who only a few lines before speaks in this style : —

Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
The region of my heart : Be Kent unmannerly
When Lear is mad. What wilt thou do, old man?
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak,
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour 's bound,
When majesty stoops to folly. . . .
Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon thy foul disease. Revoke thy doom;
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I 'll tell thee thou dost evil.

Act I. Sc. 1.

Not only would it seem that the speeches were written by different poets, but that they were written for different personages. And there is a trace of the same weakness, consciousness, and constraint in these

rhymed speeches by Goneril and by Cordelia toward the end of this scene: —

> *Gon.* Let your study
> Be to content your lord, who hath received you
> At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
> And well are worth the want that you have wanted.
> *Cor.* Time shall unfold what plaited cunning hides:
> Who cover faults, at last them shame derides.
>
> Act I. Sc. 1.

This brings us to the point that such is always the style of the rhymed soliloquies in these plays. If Shakespeare wrote them all, we must infer that the production of didactic poetry in rhyme crippled his mind and fettered his pen. Compare Edgar's speech, quoted above, which is the occasion of these remarks, with Friar Laurence's soliloquy in the third scene of Act II. of "Romeo and Juliet." I quote a few lines for present convenience: —

> O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies
> In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities:
> For nought so vile that on the earth doth live
> But to the earth some special good doth give,
> Nor aught so good but strain'd from that fair use
> Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse:
> Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied;
> And vice sometimes by action dignified.
> Within the infant rind of this small flower
> Poison hath residence, and medicine, power;
> For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part;
> Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.

This is precisely the style of thought and of verse that we find in Edgar's speech in question. The rhythm, the very sound of the lines, in the two passages is almost the same. What could be more like these lines from Edgar's speech, —

> But then the mind much suffering doth o'erskip
> When grief hath mates, and bearing, fellowship, —

than these from the friar's: —

> Within the infant rind of this small flower
> Poison hath residence, and medicine, power?

Plainly, it seems to me, if upon evidence of style and structure we refuse to accept one of these speeches as of Shakespeare's writing, we must also refuse to accept the other. Their metal is not only out of the same mine, but is minted with the same die. But may we be sure that Shakespeare wrote either of them? If we once begin to suspect and to reject, where are we to stop? And in his day play-writing was such a mere trade, such a mere manufacture of material for the use of the theatre, and playwrights were so constantly at work together upon great jobs and small jobs, — and Shakespeare in his own day was only one of these, — that we can accept nothing as absolutely his that does not bear plainly upon it the royal image and superscription.

The one point to be constantly kept in mind in the critical consideration of Shakespeare's dramas is that they were written by a second-rate actor, who, much against his will, was compelled to live by the stage in some way, and whose first object was money, — to get on in life. He wrote what he wrote merely to fill the theatre and his own pockets; he wrote as he wrote, because he was born the poet of poets, the dramatist of dramatists, the philosopher of philosophers, the most world-knowing of all men of the world. There was as much deliberate purpose in his breathing as in his play-writing.

In Edgar's speech in question there is a single word which makes much against its authenticity. He, alone and supposed to be merely thinking aloud, calls himself Tom. This naturally he would not do; this he does not do in any other instance when he is alone. He reserves that name for company, and to use his own phrase in regard to his assumed character, "daubs

it" only for their benefit. This one consideration is almost conclusive against the authenticity of the speech.

I have considered only a few of the questions in regard to the text of this tragedy which are suggested by Mr. Furness's thorough and discriminating edition of it, the study of which must hereafter be a prime object with every critical reader of Shakespeare.

II. PLOT AND PERSONAGES.

Shakespeare was forty-one years old when he wrote "King Lear." Just at the time of life when a well-constituted, healthy man has attained the maturity of his faculties, he produced the work in which we see his mind in all its might and majesty. He had then been an actor some fifteen years, and of his greater plays he had written "Romeo and Juliet," "The Merchant of Venice," "King Henry IV.," "Much Ado about Nothing," "As You Like It," "Hamlet," and "Measure for Measure." In the case of a writer whose work was of a nature that left him personally out of it, it is not safe to infer the condition of his mind from the tone of his writings. But it is worthy of remark that "King Lear" quickly followed "Measure for Measure," and came next to it as an original play, and was itself followed next by "Timon of Athens," and that in these three plays the mirror that is held up to human nature tells more revolting and alarming truths than are revealed in all his other plays together. Not in all the rest is the sum of the counts of his indictment of the great criminal so great, so grave, so black, so damning. Hardly is there to be gathered from all the others so many personages who

are so bad in all the ways of badness as the majority of those are which figure in these three.

It is, however, apart from this fact that these plays are so strongly significant of Shakespeare's judgment of mankind in his forty-second year. For, types of badness as these personages are, what they say is tenfold more condemnatory than what they do. The aphoristic anthology of "Measure for Measure," "King Lear," and "Timon of Athens" would make the blackest pages in the records of the judgments against mankind. Moreover, the chief dramatic motives of all these plays are selfishness and ingratitude; while in two of them, "King Lear" and "Timon," we find the principal personage expecting to buy love and words of love and deeds of love with bounteous gifts, and going mad with disappointment at not receiving what he thinks his due. For Timon in the forest, although he is not insane, is surely the subject of a self-inflicted monomania. Difficult as it is to trace Shakespeare himself in his plays, we can hardly err in concluding that there must have been in his experience of life and in the condition of his mind some reason for his production within three years, and with no intermediate relief, of three such plays as those in question. And the play which came between "Measure for Measure" and "King Lear," "All 's Well that Ends Well," although it is probably the product of the working over of an earlier play called "Love's Labour 's Won," can hardly be said to break the continuity of feeling which runs through its predecessor and its two immediate successors. In "All 's Well" we have Parolles, the vilest and basest character, although not the most wickedly malicious, that Shakespeare wrought; and its hero, Bertram, is so coldly

and brutally selfish that it is hard to forgive Helena her loving him. Indeed, the tone of the play finds an echo in the last lines of the Clown's song: —

> With that she sighëd as she stood.
> And gave this sentence then:
> Among nine bad if one be good,
> Among nine bad if one be good,
> There 's yet one good in ten.
>
> Act I. Sc. 3.

Was it by sheer chance and hap-hazard that Shakespeare reverted to this unpleasant story and these repulsive personages at the time when, within three years, he wrote "Measure for Measure," "King Lear," and "Timon of Athens"?

Although, in "King Lear," Shakespeare owed less to the authors from whom he took his plot than was customary with him in such cases, the general notion that he owed little (which seems to me rather confirmed than shaken by what Mr. Furness says) is altogether erroneous. The truth is that in regard to plot, incidents, personages, and their characters he (as his manner was) owed, not everything, but almost everything to his predecessors. In the construction of the tragedy all that is his is the uniting of two stories, — that of Lear and that of Gloucester, — which he wrought into one, by mighty strength and subtle art welding them together white-heated in the glowing fire of his imagination: and the change which he made in the issue of the fortunes of Lear and of Cordelia; for in the legend Cordelia triumphs, reseats her father on the throne, succeeds him, is at last rebelled against by the sons of Goneril and Regan, deposed, and put in prison, "wherewith she took suche griefe, being a woman of manlie courage, and despairing to recover libertie there, she slue herself." Verily, these are great ex-

ceptions; the latter even one that suggests Shakespeare's own declaration that "there 's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." Nevertheless, the fact that he did find in the work of foregone writers, in chronicle, in legend, in poem, in play, and in novel, all the rest of the framework, the skeleton, of this his masterpiece, is one the importance of which in the formation of a judgment of his methods, of his purposes, and of the one apparent limit of his genius cannot be overrated.

Most readers of Shakespeare probably know that the story of Lear and his three daughters is of great antiquity, and was told by many writers in prose and verse who preceded Shakespeare. He, we may be sure, read it in Holinshed and in the old play of "King Leir." The division of the kingdom; the extravagant professions of love by Goneril and Regan; the reserve of Cordelia; the wrath of the disappointed old King; the endeavor of Kent (called Perillus) to avert the consequences of his anger from his youngest daughter; the marriage of the elder sisters to Cornwall and Albany, and of the youngest to the King of France; Lear's living with the former alternately, attended by a retinue of knights; the ingratitude of Goneril and Regan; the return of Cordelia to Britain with a French army to reëstablish her father, — all this was material made to Shakespeare's hand. And not only this: the different characters of the personages in this story all existed in germ and in outline before he took it up as the subject of this tragedy.

So as to the story of Gloucester and his two sons, which was told by Sir Philip Sidney in his "Arcadia." Shakespeare found there the father, loving, kind hearted, but suspicious, and weak in principle and in

mind; the bastard, an ungrateful villain; the legitimate son, a model of filial affection; the attempt of his suspicious and deceived father to kill him; and even the loss of Gloucester's eyes, and his contrivance to commit suicide by getting his son to lead him to the verge of a cliff, whence he might cast himself down: all is there, — the incidents, the personages, and their characters.

How absurd, then, are the attempts to make out a "philosophy" of Shakespeare's dramas, to find out their "inner life," to show that this or that incident in them had a profound psychological purpose and meaning! He simply took his stories and his personages as he found them, and wrought them into such dramas as he thought would interest the audiences that came to the Globe Theatre. And they were interested in the stories, in the personages, and in their fortunes. They read little; and they *saw* the stories on the stage instead of reading them in a printed page. He made the stories thus tell themselves as no man had ever done before, or has done since, or may do hereafter. Doing this, he accomplished all his purpose, and fulfilled all their desire. The poetry, the philosophy, the revelation of knowledge of the world and of the human heart, in which he has been equalled by no other of the sons of men, were all merely incidental to his purpose of entertaining his hearers profitably to himself. Being the man that his father had begotten him and his mother had borne him, if he did the former he must do the latter. If he made any effort at all, it was as easy for him to write in his way as it was for the other playwrights of his time to write in theirs. He talked as he wrote, and wrote as he talked. One of the few facts that

we know concerning Shakespeare is this one. Ben Jonson tells it of him. He poured out the rich fruitage of his exhaustless fancy and his ever-creating imagination, until his hearers were borne down and overwhelmed with it. And his fellow-actors, in presenting the first authentic edition of his plays to the world, said, "And what he thought he uttered with that easinesse that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers."

That it was the story that he told upon the stage, and his way of telling it, which interested the public of his day, is shown by the history of the text of this very drama. To us it is a great tragedy, the greatest dramatic poem in all literature; but when its great success created a demand for it, to be read as well as seen, it was published as "Mr. William Shakespeare his true chronicle historie of the life and death of King Lear and his three daughters, with the unfortunate life of Edgar, sonne and heire to the Earle of Gloster, and his sullen and assumed humour of Tom of Bedlam, as it was played," etc. It was not the dramatic poem, but the true chronicle history that captivated the public mind, which also was interested, it would seem, no less in the strange masquerade of an earl's son in the shape of a Bedlam beggar (the least impressive and the least valuable part of the play as a work of art) than in the woes of the self-dethroned monarch. But there was another drama founded upon the story of King Lear; and the immeasurable superiority, in the public judgment, of the new dramatic version of that story is evinced by the anxiety of its publisher to advertise which one he had for sale. The pronoun *his* was then used as a mere form of the possessive case, as we use the apostrophe with *s*. "Mr. Benjamin

Johnson his comedy of Every Man in his Humour" was merely Mr. Benjamin Johnson's comedy, etc. But on the title-pages of the first and of the second edition of this tragedy, *his* was not only printed in large italic capital letters, but made a line by itself, thus, —

MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

HIS

TRUE CHRONICLE HISTORIE, ETC., —

in order that the buyer might have no doubt as to which "King Lear" he was getting. This use of *his* at that time is unique.

Now what was it that this Mr. William Shakespeare, a second-rate, money-making actor at the Globe Theatre at the Bankside, did to set all London running after his "King Lear," in disregard to any other? What it was may be shown by simply comparing two corresponding passages, one in the old play and one in the new, which the readers of Mr. Furness's edition are enabled to do by his very full abstract of the former, from which he makes copious extracts. In the old play, when King Lear disinherits Cordelia, he says to her, —

> Peace, bastard impe, no issue of King Leir,
> I will not heare thee speake one tittle more.
> Call me not father if thou love thy life,
> Nor these thy sisters once presume to name:
> Looke for no helpe henceforth from me or mine;
> Shift as thou wilt, and trust unto thyself.

After Lear, Goneril, and Regan have gone out, Perillus, the Kent of the old play, says, —

> Oh, how I grieve, to see my lord thus fond,
> To dote so much upon vain flattering words!
> Ah, if he but with good advice had weigh'd
> The hidden tenure of her humble speech,
> Reason to rage should not have given place,
> Nor poor Cordelia suffer such disgrace.

Let the reader now turn to Shakespeare's play (for I cannot spare more room to quotation), and read Lear's speech to Cordelia, beginning —

> Let it be so : thy truth then be thy dower —
> Act I. Sc. 1.

and the after broken dialogue between Lear and Kent, — that splendid tilt between tyranny and independence, in which independence for the time goes under; and by this brief comparison he will find the great although not the only secret of Shakespeare's power revealed. It will be seen (and it is important to remark) that the conception of the scene and of the feelings and opinions of the personages was much the same in the writers of both passages. All that Shakespeare did here is suggested by what his predecessor had done. But the work of one is trite, commonplace, dull, flat, stupid, dead; to describe worthily that of the other, in its fitness to the strange, rude scene, in its revelation of the emotions of the speakers, and above all in its exuberant vitality, would require a command of words equal to that of him who wrote it. There is no other so grandly fierce an altercation to be found on any page. The mature man at the hundredth reading finds it stir his blood just as it first did when the downy hair of his cold young flesh stood up, as he felt alternately with the despotic old king and with his bold, faithful, loving servant.

And yet, regarded in itself, and simply on its merits, the action in this whole scene, excepting that of Kent, is so unreasonable and unnatural as to be almost absurd; yes, quite absurd. The King's solicitation of the flattery of his daughters is absurd, unworthy of a reasonable creature; the flattery of the elder sisters is nauseously absurd; the reserve of Cordelia is foolishly

absurd; the instant change of feeling in the king is absurd to the verge of incredibility. But for this Shakespeare is not responsible, except in so far as he is made so by the choice of the story. For all this is in the story; and it is the story that is absurd, not Shakespeare. What he did was to see in it its great capability of dramatic treatment, notwithstanding its absurdity. Lear's purposed division of his kingdom, his behavior to his daughters and their behavior to him, and his consequent disinheritance of the youngest are a postulate which is not to be questioned. They are absurd, but without their absurdity there would have been no play. Let us accept their absurdity, say nothing, and be thankful. For with the disinheriting of Cordelia the absurdity stops short; it does not last one moment longer; it does not infect one line of any subsequent speech. To this remark there is one exception, — the scene in which Gloucester is deluded into believing that he has thrown himself from Dover cliff. But again, this incident is from the story in Sidney's "Arcadia," which Shakespeare used. True, he develops and enriches it, and gilds its absurdity with crusted gold of thought and language, but he does not essentially change it; giving thus (for he might have omitted this incident or have altered it) an illustration of his habitual copiousness of imagination and of fancy, and of his no less habitual parsimony, if not of his poverty, of constructive skill.

In its first scene is deployed the whole potentiality of the tragedy. The germ of every character, the spring of every dramatic motive developed during the whole five acts is to be found there; and every personage of any importance is there, excepting the Fool and the legitimate Edgar, who after all is not a very

important or a very dramatic person, and who is chiefly interesting to that part of an audience which likes to be called upon to sympathize with virtue in distress, and to have its curiosity excited by seeing a nobleman in the disguise of a beggar. Edgar performs, however, a very useful function as a provocative to the half-insane sententiousness of Lear in the hovel and at the farm-house (Act III. Sc. 4 and 6), and as a means to help the progress of the play and to bring it to a close. He is a very good young man; but, like many other good young men, he is not interesting in himself; he is only the occasion of our interest in others. The drama neither rests upon him, nor is moved by him; and yet without him it would halt.

Among all the personages of the tragedy who take a sufficient part in the action to fill any space in the mind's eye of the reader, or to dwell in his memory, Edgar is the only one whose character and conduct are entirely beyond reproach. For in this play, in which from its first scene to its last our minds are kept upon the stretch of tense anxiety, the people whose hopes and fears we share and whose woes pierce us with a personal pang are no model men and women. Strength and weakness, good and ill, even nobility and meanness, appear in them side by side, mingled in varying proportions. Like Lear's hand, they all smell of mortality. Some, indeed, as Edmund, Goneril, and Regan, are mere reptiles or wild beasts in human form, and yet even these are not allowed to go entirely without our sympathy; but the best of them, Cordelia, is infected with a vice of soul which taints her whole being, until it is purged thence by the sorrow with which it floods her loving heart.

The first scene shows us, as I have said, the characters of all these personages with more or less completeness. The very first sentence, Kent's speech, "I thought the king had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall," shows us that Lear had the gift to know men, as the subsequent conduct of Albany and Cornwall proves. Gloucester's second speech, in regard to his bastard son and that son's mother, reveals his weakness, the sin which doth most easily beset him, and no less the frankness of his nature, his boldness in assuming the responsibility of his acts, his capacity of love and confidence. Lear comes in, and instantly dominates the scene; somewhat because of his royalty of station, but far more because of his majesty of person and of bearing. At once his grand figure casts a shadow that lies all along his life to its dark end. We readers of Shakespeare know that end; but did we not know it, could we fail to see, or at least to apprehend, what must be the end when that haughty heart, as loving as a woman's and as weakly exacting, not content with love shown in life, but craving assurance of it in flattering words, strips itself of the fact of royalty, and, hoping to retain the semblance, lays itself down unshielded by a crown before the claws and fangs of Goneril and Regan, those she-monsters of a dark and monster-bearing age? The man who detected the superior nature of Albany in the two suitors who were recommending themselves to his favor, and who yet could be wilfully blind to the cruelty and selfishness of their wives because they were his daughters, and who could turn in wrath upon his little favorite, his last and least, and disinherit her because she did not pour out in fulsome words the love which he knew she bore him, ethically deserved an end

of grief, and was psychologically a fit subject of insanity. And by what marvellous untraceable touch of art is it that Shakespeare has conveyed to us that Lear, in his casting off Cordelia, is half conscious all the while that he is doing wrong? The intuitive perception of the fitness of such a man to be the central figure in such a tragedy as this, and of the moral righteousness of the afflictions which he lays upon him and the sad inevitableness of the end to which he brings him, is a manifestation of Shakespeare's dramatic genius hardly less impressive than his execution of the work itself.

Lear, although of a kindly, loving nature, and in certain aspects very grand and noble, is yet largely capable of a very mean passion, revenge, the basest of the three passions — the others being pride, and its offspring jealousy — which cause the chief misery of human life. Revenge says not to the wrongdoer, — You shall do me right, you shall make restoration; those are the words of justice; but, — I have suffered, and therefore I wish you to suffer. I will pray in my heart, if not with my tongue, that you may suffer, and if I have my opportunity I will make you suffer at my own hand, although I know that this will do nothing to right the wrong that you have done. This is revenge. Lear, stung by the ingratitude of Goneril, prays openly, and manifestly prays with his whole heart, that she may undergo all the sorrow and pain that can be borne by woman. It is frightful to hear this old man, in the revulsion of feeling, imprecate misery illimitable upon his own daughter. He prays in general terms for inexpressible anguish to fall upon her; he prays for particular ills and pains with horrible and almost loathsome specification: —

> All the stor'd vengeances of heaven fall
> On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,
> You taking airs, with lameness!
>
> Act II. Sc. 4.

He has before this poured out the gall of his bitterness upon Goneril herself in what is usually called his curse. But it is not a curse; it is a prayer, — a passionate plea to the powers of nature that they will inflict upon her the extremest agony of soul that can be felt by woman. He asks that it may come in all its completeness; he omits nothing, not even the laughter and contempt that women feel so much more keenly than men do. The prayer would shock and revolt the whole world, were it not that it closes with those lines that cause sympathy to flash like a flame from the hearts of all born of woman: —

> That she may feel
> How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
> To have a thankless child!
>
> Act I. Sc. 4.

And he deliberately threatens revenge, if we may say that after Goneril's treatment of him he does anything deliberately: —

> No, you unnatural hags,
> I will have such revenges on you both
> That all the world shall — I will do such things —
> What they are yet I know not; but they shall be
> The terrors of the earth.
>
> Act II. Sc. 4.

Poor raving, impotent threatener, menacing others with nameless terrors; himself condemned to suffer the extremity of grief as the consequence of his own folly, and to die with just enough intellect to know the utterness of his misery!

His very insanity, or the exciting cause of his insanity, Lear brings upon himself. For he is not driven out into the storm, or driven out at all; al-

though he speaks, and leads others to speak, as if he were, and such has consequently been the general verdict. But after his threat, without one word from Regan or from Cornwall, he rushes into the open, and himself seeks in the storm what is at first a grateful and sympathetic companionship of turbulence (Act III. Sc. 2). Regan will not have any of his hundred knights, but she will take him. Detestable as she and her husband are in their stony, cruel selfishness, we feel that so far as the King's action is concerned, there is some reason in what they say when he turns his back upon them and shelter: —

> *Corn.* Let us withdraw; 't will be a storm.
> *Reg.* The house is little: the old man and 's people
> Cannot be well bestow'd.
> *Corn.* 'T is his own blame; 'hath put himself from rest
> And must needs taste his folly.
> *Reg.* For his particular, I 'll receive him gladly,
> But not one follower.
>
> Act II. Sc. 4.

Shakespeare meant that this should be considered, and also intentionally made Lear by exaggeration misrepresent his treatment.

And this brings to mind that, except with childish or unthinking readers, the two elder sisters are at first not altogether without reason for the conduct at which he rages himself into frenzy. His proposed sojourn with them alternately, accompanied by a retinue of a hundred knights, was inherently sure to breed confusion and disturbance. Malicious art could not have devised a plan better fitted to bring itself to an end in turmoil and exasperation. It is with some sympathy with Goneril that every man or woman of family experience hears her complaint about the throng of men, "so disordered, so debosh'd and bold," that they made her castle "seem like a riotous inn." We know

that it could not have been otherwise. And yet her father at once breaks forth, "Darkness and devils! Saddle my horses!"

There is no justification of Lear's conduct, hardly any excuse for it, up to the time when he rushes out into the storm. He was not insane; he had not even begun to be insane before that time; and after that time we may almost say that he seeks madness. In the fury of his wrath as an offended king, and of his morbid grief as an outraged father, his intellect commits a sort of suicide. As other men throw themselves into the water, he throws himself into the storm, hoping to find oblivion in the counter-irritation of its severity. The robustness of his frame and the strength of his will sustain him for a while; and it is his old brain which first gives way, — as he felt that it would, and yet was reckless of the danger.

From the time when Lear first shows signs of breaking down, which is in the scene before the hovel (Act III. Sc. 4), where he meets Edgar disguised as poor Tom, I abandon all attempt to follow the gradual yet rapid ruin of his mind, which, like some strong and stately building sapped at its foundation, first cracks and crumbles, then yawns apart, and rushes headlong down, scattering its not yet quite dismembered beauties into confused heaps; leaving some of them standing in all their majesty, with their riven interiors baldly exposed to view. Others (but I know them not) may have the words in which to picture this destruction; but I confess that I have not, except in the futile way of recording the quickly succeeding stages of the catastrophe and cataloguing the items of the ruins.

From this point the action of Lear's mind may be

apprehended, may even be comprehended, but to any good purpose, it seems to me, neither analyzed nor described. I can only contemplate it in silence, fascinated by its awfulness and by what all must feel to be its truth. For the strange inexplicable power of this sad spectacle is that we who have not been insane like Lear, although like him we may have been foolish and headstrong, yet know that here is a true representation of the wreck of a strong nature, which has not fallen into decay, but has been rent into fragments. In the preceding scene Lear is not insane. The speech beginning, —

> Let the great gods
> That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads
> Find out their enemies now,

merely shows the tension of a mind strained to the last pitch of possible endurance, like a string upon a musical instrument which is stretched to the very point of breaking. But the string is not yet broken; the instrument is still in tune. These words at the close of the speech, —

> I am a man
> More sinned against than sinning,

show that the speaker is still capable of a logical defence of his own actions; and his next utterance, "My wits begin to turn," is evidence that they have not yet turned. Men who are insane believe that they alone are reasonable; and when Lear at last is crazed he makes no allusion to the condition of his intellect. When, at the end of this act, he returns to the feeble semblance of himself, in that pathetic passage in which he recognizes Cordelia, he says, "I fear I am not in my perfect mind," — a sure sign that his mind, although at once senile and childish, is no longer distracted.

After this he sinks rapidly; but in his speech to Cordelia, when they are brought in prisoners, in which he says that they will sing in prison "like birds in a cage," and "laugh at gilded butterflies," he has not become again insane. The tone of his mind has gone; he has passed even the pride of manliness, and has fallen to a point at which he can look upon the remnants of his former self without anger, and even with a gentle pity. Of all the creations of dramatic art this is the most marvellous. Art it must be, and yet art inexplicable. We might rather believe that Shakespeare, when he was writing these scenes, could say in Milton's phrase, Myself am Lear. Strangest, perhaps, of all is the sustained royalty of Lear's madness. For Lear, mad or sane, is always kingly. His very faults are those of a good-natured tyrant; and in his darkest hours his wrongs sit crowned and robed upon a throne. In looking upon his disintegrated mind, it is no common structure that we see cast down; it is a palace that lies before our eyes in ruins, — a palace, with all its splendor, its garniture of sweet and delicate beauty, and its royal and imposing arrogance of build.

To us of the present day who have a just appreciation of "King Lear" it is unactable, as Lamb has said already. It stands upon too lofty a plane; its emotions are too mountainous to be within the reach of mimic art. The efforts of actors of flesh and blood to represent it are as futile as the attempts of the stage carpenter to represent that tempest with the rattling of his sheet-iron and the rumble of his cannon-balls. Nor has there been any actor in modern days who united in himself the person and the art required for the presentation of our ideal of King Lear. Gar-

rick was too small; Kean too fiery and gypsy-like; Kemble was physically fit for it, but too cold and artificial. As to any of the later actors, it is needless to describe the unfitness which they themselves have so ably illustrated.

Lear's daughters form a trio that live in our minds like three figures of the old mythology. My own acquaintance with "King Lear" began at a time when fairy stories had not lost their interest for me, — if indeed they have lost it, or will ever lose it, — and I associated Cordelia and her sisters with Cinderella and her sisters, and the likeness still lingers with me. Perhaps there is no other similarity than the cruel selfishness of the two elder women and the sweet and tender beauty of the youngest in both stories. And Cordelia, with all her gentle loveliness and charm, the influence of which pervades the play as the perfume of a hidden lily of the valley pervades the surrounding air, had one great fault, which is the spring of all the woes of this most woful of all tragedies. That fault was pride, the passion which led to the first recorded murder. Her pride revolted when she saw her royal father accept the oblation of her sisters' false-hearted flattery; and she shrank from laying down the offering of her true affection upon the altar which she felt they had profaned. When, like Cain, she saw that her sacrifice was rejected, she let her pride come between her and the father whom she so fondly loved. It was her pride and her determination to subdue her rivals, as much as her filial affection, that led her to invade her country with a foreign army, to restore him to his throne. And with her pride went its often attendant, a propensity to satire, the unloveliest trait that can mar a lovely woman's character.

When, in the first scene, she demurely says,

> The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
> Cordelia leaves you : I know you what you are, etc.,

we feel that it is sharply said, but also that it might better have been left unsaid; and we sympathize a little with Regan in her retort, "Prescribe not us our duties," and with Goneril in hers, that Cordelia may now best turn her attention to pleasing the husband who has received her "at fortune's alms." Plutarch tells us rightly that ill deeds are forgiven sooner than sharp words. But it must be admitted that Cordelia's pride stands her in good stead when, in Hudson's happy phrase, "she so promptly switches off her higgling suitor" with —

> Peace be with Burgundy ;
> Since that respects of fortune are his love,
> I shall not be his wife.

But her pride and her speech to her sisters helped to destroy her father, and to put a halter round her own neck.

Edmund suggests Iago; but, with other minor differences, — differences of person and of manner, — there is this great unlikeness between them: Edmund is not spontaneously vile. His baseness and cruelty have an origin not only comprehensible, but with the bonds of a certain sort of sympathy. It was not his fault that he was illegitimate. He was no less his father's son than Edgar was; and yet he found himself with a branded stigma upon his name. This is not even a palliation of his villainy; but it is a motive for it that may be understood. If Edmund had been born in wedlock, he would still have been a bad man at heart; but he might have lived a reputable life and have done little harm. There are more such reputable men than we suspect. As it is, he uses all his gifts

of mind and of person to gain his selfish ends. He has great ability and no scruples, — absolutely none. When these qualities are combined, as in him they were combined with a fine person and attractive manners (and as they also were combined in Iago), the resulting power for evil is incalculable, almost unlimited. Both the sisters feel Edmund's personal attraction, and respect his courage and enterprising spirit; and the astute Cornwall sees his ability, and says to him, "Natures of such deep trust we shall much need." He has a touch of man's nature in him that is absent in Iago. He prizes the preference of women. When he is dying, slain by Edgar, and the bodies of Goneril and Regan are brought in, he says, —

> Yet Edmund was beloved ;
> The one the other poisoned for my sake,
> And after slew herself.
>
> Act V. Sc. 3.

And, as if brought by this feminine influence, bad as it was, within the range of human affections, he instantly does all that he can to stay the execution of his sentence of death upon Lear and Cordelia. Iago goes out, a cold-blooded, malignant villain to the last.

And this suggests to me Shakespeare's effort to mitigate the horrors of that revolting scene in which Gloucester's eyes are torn out. The voice of humanity, otherwise stifled there, is heard in the speech and embodied in the action of the serving-man, who, with words that recall those of Kent to Lear in the first scene, breaks in upon his master, fights him, kills him, and is himself slain by the hand of Regan, — an outburst of manhood which is a great relief. Although Shakespeare found the incident of the loss of Gloucester's eyes in the old story, and used it in a

way which illustrated at once the savage manners of the time in which his tragedy was supposed to be acted and the cruelty of Cornwall and Regan, he intuitively shrank from leaving the scene in its otherwise bare and brutal hideousness.

One personage of importance remains who cannot be passed by unconsidered in an attempt to appreciate this drama. It needs hardly to be said that this is the Fool. What Shakespeare did not do, as well as what he did do, as a playwright has no better proof or illustration than in his Fools. He did not invent the personage; he found it on the stage. Indeed he invented nothing; he added nothing to the drama as he found it; he made nothing, not even the story of one of his own plays; he created nothing, save men and women, and Ariels and Calibans. What he did with the Fool was this. This personage is the resultant compound of the Vice, a rude allegorical personage constantly in the old Moral Plays, with the court jester. He was a venter of coarse and silly ribaldry, and a player of practical jokes. Only so far back as the time of Shakespeare's boyhood, the Fool's part was in most cases not written, and at the stage direction, "*Stultus loquitur*" (the Fool speaks) he performed his function extempore; and thus he continued to jape and to caper for the diversion of those who liked horse-play and ribaldry. But Shakespeare saw that the grinning toad had a jewel in his head, and touching him with his transforming pen shows him to us as he appears in "As You Like It," in "Twelfth Night," in "All's Well that Ends Well," and last of all, and greatest, in "King Lear."

In this tragedy the Fool rises to heroic proportions, as he must have risen to be in keeping with his sur-

roundings. He has wisdom enough to stock a college of philosophers, — wisdom which has come from long experience of the world without responsible relations to it. For plainly he and Lear have grown old together. The king is much the older; but the Fool has the marks of time upon his face as well as upon his mind. They have been companions since he was a boy; and Lear still calls him boy and lad, as he did when he first learned to look kindly upon his young, loving, half-distraught companion. The relations between them have plainly a tenderness which, knowingly to both, is covered, but not hidden, by the grotesque surface of the Fool's official function. His whole soul is bound up in his love for Lear and for Cordelia. He would not set his life "at a pin's fee" to serve his master; and when his young mistress goes to France he pines away for the sight of her. When the King feels the consequences of his headstrong folly, the Fool continues the satirical comment which he begins when he offers Kent his coxcomb. So might Touchstone have done; but in a vein more cynical, colder, and without that undertone rather of sweetness than of sadness which tells us that this jester has a broken heart.

About the middle of the play the Fool suddenly disappears, making, in reply to Lear's remark, "We 'll go to supper in the morning," the fitting rejoinder, "And I 'll go to bed at noon." Why does he not return? Clearly for this reason; he remains with Lear during his insanity, to answer in antiphonic commentary the mad king's lofty ravings with his simple wit and homespun wisdom; but after that time, when Lear sinks from frenzy into forlorn imbecility, the Fool's utterances would have jarred upon our ears. The

situation becomes too grandly pathetic to admit the presence of a jester, who, unless he is professional, is nothing. Even Shakespeare could not make sport with the great primal elements of woe. And so the poor Fool sought the little corner where he slept the last time — *functus officio.*

I see that in the last paragraph I am inconsistent; attributing to Shakespeare, first, a deliberate artistic purpose, and then, with regard to the same object, a dramatic conception, the offspring of sentiment. Let the inconsistency stand; it becomes him of whom it is spoken. Shakespeare was mightily taken hold of by these creatures of his imagination, and they did before his eyes what he did not at first intend that they should do. True, his will was absolute over his genius, which was subject to him, not he to it; but like a wizard he was sometimes obsessed by the spirits which he had willingly called up. In none of his dramas is this attitude of their author so manifest as in this, the largest in conception, noblest in design, richest in substance, and highest in finish of all his works, and which, had he written it alone (if we can suppose the existence of such a sole production), would have set him before all succeeding generations, the miracle of time.

STAGE ROSALINDS.

Most readers of Shakespeare have a very clear ideal of Rosalind. They may be in doubt as to the physical and mental traits of others of his women, — Lady Macbeth, Beatrice, Portia, or even Juliet; but the heroine of "As You Like It" lives in their eyes as well as in their hearts and minds, a very firmly and deeply engraven personage. This is partly because Shakespeare himself has done so much more to help us in forming a conception of Rosalind than he has done in regard to any other of his women, except Imogen. For it is worthy of special remark that he has given us hardly a hint as to his own idea of the personal appearance, or even of the mental and moral constitution, of these prominent figures of his *dramatis personæ*. We are left to make all this out for ourselves from their actions and their words, or from the impression which they make upon those by whom he has surrounded them. This, indeed, is the dramatic way. As the dramatist never speaks in his own person, he must needs describe by the lips of others; but those others are beings of his own creation, and he can make them say what he pleases, the one about the others. It would seem, then, that a poet could hardly fail to delight his own sense of beauty by putting into the mouth of some of his personages descriptions of the charms of the women around whom centres so

much of the interest of mimic life upon the stage; that he would, as fitly he might, at least cause his lovers to tell us something of the womanly beauty and the womanly charm by which they have been enthralled.

Many dramatists have done this, but not Shakespeare. He was content to show us his women as they lived, and loved, and suffered, and came at last to joy in their love, or to grief, — one of them, in her ambition. And it would seem that he did this simply because he did not care to do otherwise; because he had not himself any very precise conception as to particular details of person, or even of character, as to most of his women. He took an old play, or an old story, the incidents of which he thought would interest a mixed audience, and this he worked over into a new dramatic form, making it, quite unconsciously, and altogether without purpose, scene by scene and line by line, immortal by his psychological insight and the magic of his style. If the action marched on well, and the personages and the situations were interesting, he was content; and he concentrated such effort as he made — making very little, for he wrote his plays with a heedless ease which is without a parallel in the history of literature — upon the scene immediately in hand, without much thought as to what had gone before or what was to come after. That was determined for him mostly by the story or the play which he had chosen to work upon; and the splendid whole which he sometimes, but not always, made, was the unpremeditated and, I am sure, the almost unconscious result of an inborn instinct of dramatic effect of the highest kind, and an intuitive perception of what would touch the soul and stir the blood of common

healthy human nature. These were his only motives, his only purposes. For all that we know of his life and of his dramatic career leaves no room for doubt that, if his public had preferred it, he would have written thirty-seven plays like "Titus Andronicus" just as readily, although not just as willingly, as he wrote "As You Like It," "King Lear," "Hamlet," and "Othello." Therefore it was — to return to our first point — that he did not trouble himself to paint us portraits of his heroines. That he should do so was not down on his dramatic brief: his audiences were interested, and therefore he was interested, chiefly, if not only, in the story that was to be set forth in action.

How bare his dramas are of personal description will hardly be believed by those who have not read them carefully, with an eye to this particular. He shows us, as I have remarked before, the effect which his personages produced upon each other; but he says very little of the means by which the effect was produced; and this is more remarkable as to his women than as to his men, because we naturally expect in a poet or a novelist a greater interest in the personal attractions of women. But Shakespeare passes all this by in generalities. Romeo says that Juliet's beauty "teaches the torches to burn bright" that it "hangs upon the cheek of night like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear;" the love-sick Duke in "Twelfth Night" says that Olivia was so beautiful that he "thought she purged the air of pestilence:" but neither of these enamored men says a word, or drops a hint, to tell us whether these wondrous women were fair or dark, or tall or short, — whether they were formed like fairies or like the Venus of Melos. Of Portia we know, by a chance

line, that she was golden-haired; but it is by no means certain that even this touch of personal description was not suggested by the *auri sacra fames* of the fortune-hunting adventurer who wins the beautiful heiress rather than by the desire to give a touch of color to the picture of the heroine.[1]

It is only when Shakespeare comes to paint the loveliest and most perfect of all his women, Imogen, who indeed seems to have been both his idol and his ideal, that he describes the beauty of which Leonatus is the hardly deserving possessor. And yet, even here again, it is by no means certain that his unwonted particularity in this respect is not the mere consequence of the peculiar nature of the domestic story that is interwoven with the political drama of Cymbeline, King of Britain. Imogen's beauty must be described, because it is partly the occasion of the wager which is the spring of the love action of the drama; because it impresses her unknown brothers; and because some particular knowledge of it is obtained by the villain of the play, "the yellow Iachimo," and is descanted on by him as proof of his boasted success in his assault upon her chastity.

Rosalind's beauty was different from Imogen's; more splendid and impressive, if perhaps less tender and cherubic. Unless I am in error, we all think of Imogen as rather a little below than above the standard height of woman's stature. Rosalind was notably tall; a girl who at middle age would become magnificent. She was fair, with dark lustrous hair, and eyes perhaps blue, gray, or perhaps black, according as the

[1] And her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
Act I. Sc. 1.

man who thinks of her has eyes black, brown, or blue; but I am pretty sure that they were of that dark olive green which has all the potentiality of both blue and black, and which is apt to accompany natures which combine all the sensuous and mental charms that are possible in woman. She was of a robust — yet firm and elastic rather than robust — physical and moral nature; her vigor and her spring being, nevertheless, tempered by a delicacy of rare fineness, which had its source in sentiment, — sentiment equally tender and healthy. Such was the woman who is the central figure of the most charming ideal comedy in all dramatic literature.

Shakespeare's plays were written with a single eye to their presentation on the stage. They attained with great distinction the objective point of their production. Their author, known to the world now as the greatest of poets, and the subtlest, profoundest, and truest observer of man and of the world, was known to the public of London in his own day chiefly as the most successful and popular of playwrights. His plays were performed to full houses, when those by the best of his fellow dramatists hardly paid the expenses of production. We may be sure that in writing them, and in superintending the placing them on the stage (which doubtless fell to his hands), he was undisturbed by that lofty ideal of signification and of character which now makes their worthy performance, for his most loving students and admirers, in some cases almost impossible. "King Lear," "Hamlet," "Antony and Cleopatra," "The Tempest," and we might almost say "Romeo and Juliet" are now lifted too high into the realms of fancy and imagination to be within the reach of any actor whose merely human voice rivals the dialogue "'twixt his

stretched footing and the scaffoldage." The comedies are more within the reach of ordinary human endeavor; for comedy moves upon a lower plane, deals with commoner and humbler events of man's life experiences. But, among the comedies, some of the most charming involve in their proper presentation a perplexity which is of a purely physical nature. Conspicuous among these are his two most beautiful works in ideal comedy, "As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night." The difficulty in question is caused by the fact that in these comedies the heroines appear during the greater part of the play in male attire; and that not only do they go about before *us* dressed as men and acting as men, but appear to their lovers as men, and deceive them, almost from *Enter* to *Exeunt*. Of these plays, "As You Like It" presents the greatest difficulty of this kind, and with that we shall now chiefly concern ourselves.

It is first to be said, however, that for this contrivance for the production of dramatic movement and the exciting of dramatic interest the author is not properly responsible. He found these incidents and these entanglements in the stories which he undertook to dramatize, and which he chose because they were already in favor with the public he sought to please. The masquerading of a young woman in man's attire was a favorite device with all the story-writers and play-writers of the sixteenth century, in whose works Shakespeare found the material for most of his dramas.[1] "As You Like It" is built out of the material of one of these stories; rather, indeed, it is one of these stories made playable by Shakespeare's

[1] Remark, for example, all the love tales told in the course of *Don Quixote*.

skill as a dramatist, and lifted by him unconsciously into the realms of immortality by his poetic uplook and his sweet and universal sympathy. Almost whether he would or would not, he was obliged to make his heroine go through her prolonged parade of sexual deception.

And now to consider this in regard to its possibility: first, for Shakespeare's audience; next, as the Scotch lassie wished her partner to consider love, "in the aibstract." Briefly, the case is this: Rosalind meets Orlando in the orchard of the Duke's palace, talks with him, sees him wrestle, talks with him again, falls in love with him, and captivates him by her beauty and her grace, and by that subtle emanation of her sex's power when moved by love which is one of its strongest and most enchaining influences. She leaves him so under the influence of her personality that, stirred by all these motives, and by the sympathy of such a woman in his moody and desperate condition, he loves her before they meet again. Within a few days they do meet in the Forest of Arden; he in his proper person; she in the person of a saucy young fellow, who is living a half-rural, half-hunter life on the edge of the Forest. There she encounters him on many occasions, during what must have been a considerable period of time, some ten days or a fortnight: and there, also, she meets her father, the banished Duke, and Jaques, a cynical old gentleman, of much and not very clean worldly experience. By none of these persons is her sex suspected. She even wheedles Orlando into playing, like child's play, that she is his Rosalind; and all the while it never enters his head that this pretty, wayward, wilful, witty lad is the beautiful woman whose eyes and lips won him to

return the love that she had given him unasked. Now this is simply impossible; absolutely impossible; physically impossible; morally impossible; outrageously impossible. It is an affront to common sense, a defiance to the evidence of our common senses; impossible now, impossible then, impossible ever, — unless under the conditions which Shakespeare prescribes for it, which conditions are violated by every Rosalind that I ever saw upon the stage, and most of all by the last of them, who not only erred in this respect with all her sisters, but who, among the many bad Rosalinds that I have seen, was indisputably the worst.[1]

In judging of what Shakespeare did in "As You Like It," and other plays of similar construction, we must first of all take into consideration the conditions under which he wrote. The most important of these from our present point of view is that, in his day, there were no actresses upon the stage; all women's parts, young and old, were played by men. This was added to the marvel of his creation of enchanting womanhood, — that he was writing those women's words for actors who had to be shaved before they were ready to go on with their parts. But in plays like "As You Like it" the complication was yet greater. There was a double inversion. His woman's

[1] And yet this lady is singularly endowed with all the physical traits required for an ideal Rosalind. I would not publicly blazon her beauties and catalogue her charms; nor on the other hand point with invidious finger at deficiencies and superfluities that make us wonder what must be the common standard of the country in which she, as *pulcherrima*, bears off the golden apple. I shall only say that both above and below the waist, in its upper as well as its lower limbs, her figure is notably like that of a fine, well-grown lad; and that her face, even in the wonderful setting of the jewel eyes, which with the line of the nose is the finest part of it, might well be that of an uncommonly pretty young fellow of Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Norman blood.

words, his self-revealing, almost self-creating woman's words, were to be spoken not only by a man pretending to be a woman, but by a man pretending to be a woman who pretended to be a man. Shakespeare, however, was surely troubled by nothing of this. He struck right at the heart of things, and made his woman for us as she lived in his imagination. Whether Anne Page was to be presented by an Anne Page, or by a lubberly postmaster's boy, or whether she was not to be presented, it was quite the same to him. If he was to make her at all, he must make her as he did. To produce her thus was just as easy for him as for an inferior workman to turn out his clumsy creature, who might indeed be a postmaster's boy in petticoats. But so far as performance was concerned, or stage illusion, or whatever we may call that impression which we receive from the mimic life of the theatre, this performance of women's parts by young men was of the greatest importance when we come to consider the representation of female personages who assume the dress and the character of men.

For in the first place, as it will be seen, the male guise was then not disguise. What the spectator saw before his eyes was actually a young man, who might or might not, upon occasion, assume certain feminine airs and graces with more or less success. And this physical fact was of the more importance, because in these plays, generally, the woman is disguised during the greater part of the performance, and takes on her woman's weeds again, if at all, only in the last scene. Nor does the reverse of the action present any difficulty at all equal to that which has been thus overcome. A handsome, smooth-faced young man, skilled in the actor's art, and disguised by wig and paint,

could very easily present a face to his audience which they would not think for a moment of doubting was that of a woman; and when he was playing the woman scenes of his woman's part, all that was distinctively masculine in his person would be entirely concealed by his woman's dress. In his woman's scenes, his disguise would be so easy that to a skilled and practised actor they would present no difficulty that would give him a moment's trouble. This was even more the case in Shakespeare's day than it is now. For then the dress of a lady, with its high ruff, its stiff stomacher, and its huge farthingale, destroyed in every case all semblance to the lines of woman's figure as nature has bounteously vouchsafed it to us. No one can study the portraits of gentlewomen of the time of Elizabeth and James I. without seeing that the human creatures within that portentous raiment might just as well, for all their semblance to woman, be masculine as feminine. And if there had not been almost equal absurdity and extravagance in some parts of male costume of that day, the difficulty in this matter of disguise would have been rather in the acceptance of the pretending man as a woman in masquerade. For, referring to the impossibility above set forth that Rosalind could have been mistaken for a young man by her lover, we see that, even if her face were masked or hidden, and her dress revealed her woman's form as it does upon our stage, no man who had sufficient appreciation of a woman's beauty to deserve to possess it could be deceived in the sex of Ganymede for one moment.

That this is true will hardly be disputed by any woman; certainly by no observant man. And yet it would seem as if the Rosalinds — all of them — laid

themselves out to defy both Shakespeare and common sense in this matter to the utmost of attainable possibility. When they come before us as Ganymede they dress themselves not only as no man or boy in England, but as no human creature within the narrow seas, was dressed in Shakespeare's time. Instead of a doublet, they don a kind of short tunic, girdled at the waist and hanging to the knee. They wear long stockings, generally of silk, imagining them to be hose, and ignorant, probably, that in Shakespeare's time there were not a dozen pair of silk hose in all England. Nevertheless they go about with nothing but tight silk stockings upon their legs, amid the underwood and brambles of the Forest of Arden. With some appreciation of this absurdity, one distinguished actress in this part wears long buttoned gaiters, which are even more anachronistic than the silk stockings. Upon their heads they all of them, without exception, wear a sort of hat which was unknown to the masculine head in the days of Elizabeth and James, — a low-crowned, broad-brimmed something, more like what is known to ladies of late years as a "Gainsborough" than anything else that has been named by milliners. If a man had appeared in the streets of London at that day in such a hat, he would have been hooted at by all the 'prentices in Eastcheap. There was not in all the Forest of Arden a wolf or a bear, of the slightest pretensions to fashion, that would not have howled at the sight of such a head-gear. Briefly, the Rosalinds of the stage are pretty, impossible monsters, unlike anything real that ever was seen, unlike anything that could have been accepted by their lovers for what they pretend to be, and particularly unlike that which Shakespeare intended that they should be.

Let us see what Shakespeare did intend his Rosalind to be when she was in the Forest of Arden. And first, as we have already seen, he provided carefully for one important part of the illusion in making his heroine "more than common tall." He evidently conceived Rosalind as a large, fine girl, with a lithe, although vigorous and well-rounded figure. But when he sends her off with Celia, to walk through lonely country roads and outlaw-inhabited forest glades, he takes special care to leave us in no doubt as to the extent as well as the nature of her concealment, not only of her sex but of her personal comeliness. She reminds Celia that "beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold;" and then they go into the particulars of their disguise in speeches, one part of which is always cut out, amid the many curtailments to which this play is subjected for the stage. Celia says not only, "I 'll put myself in poor and mean attire," but also, "and with a kind of umber smirch my face." "The like do you," she adds to Rosalind; "so shall we pass along and never stir assailants." Plainly, when the young princesses set forth on their wild adventure, they did all that they could to conceal the feminine beauty of their faces. Celia puts herself in the dress of a woman of the lower classes. Rosalind assumes not merely the costume of a young man, but that of a martial youth, almost of a swashbuckler. She says that she will have "a swashing and a martial outside," as well as carry a boar-spear in her hand, and have a curtle-axe upon her thigh. And, by the way, it is amusing to see the literalness with which the stage Rosalinds take up the text, and rig themselves out in conformity with their construction, or it may be the conventional stage construction, of it.

They carry, among other dangling fallals, a little axe in their belts, or strapped across their shoulders. But Rosalind's curtle-axe was merely a *court-lasse*, or cutlass, or, in plain English, a short sword, which she should wear as any soldierly young fellow of the day would wear his sword.

Thus, browned, and with her hair tied up in love-knots, after the fashion of the young military dandies of that time, with her boar-spear and her cutlass, she would yet have revealed her sex to any discriminating masculine eye, had it not been for certain peculiarities of costume in Shakespeare's day. These were the doublet and the trunk-hose. Rosalind, instead of wearing a tunic or short gown, cut up to the knees, like the little old woman who "went to market her eggs for to sell" when she fell asleep by the king's highway, should wear the very garments that she talks so much about, and in which I never saw a Rosalind appear upon the stage. A doublet was a short jacket, with close sleeves, fitting tight to the body, and coming down only to the hip, or a very little below it. Of course its form varied somewhat with temporary fashion, and sometimes, indeed, it stopped at the waist. To this garment the hose (which were not stockings, but the whole covering for the leg from shoe to doublet) were attached by silken tags called points. But during the greater part of Shakespeare's life what were called trunk-hose were worn; and these, being stuffed out about the hips and the upper part of the thigh with bombast, or what was called cotton-wool, entirely reversed the natural outline of man's figure between the waist and the middle of the thigh, and made it impossible to tell, so far as shape was concerned, whether the wearer was of the male or female

sex. Rosalind, by the doublet and hose that Shakespeare had in mind, and makes her mention as an outside so very foreign to the woman nature that is within, would have concealed the womanliness of her figure even more than by her umber she would have darkened, if not eclipsed, the beauty of her face. This concealment of forms, which would at once have betrayed her both to father and lover, was perfected by a necessary part of her costume as a young man living a forest life: these were boots. An essential part of Rosalind's forest dress as Ganymede is loose boots of soft tawny leather, coming up not only over leg, but partly over thigh, and almost meeting the puffed and bombasted trunk-hose. To complete this costume in character, she should wear a coarse russet cloak, and a black felt hat with narrow brim and high and slightly conical crown, on the band of which she might put a short feather, and around it might twist a light gold chain or ribbon and medal. Thus disguised, Rosalind might indeed have defied her lover's eye or her father's. Thus arrayed, the stage Rosalind might win us to believe that she was really deluding Orlando with the fancy that the soul of his mistress had migrated into the body of a page. This Rosalind might even meet the penetrating eye of that old sinner Jaques, experienced as he was in all the arts and deceits of men and women, in all climes and in all countries. With this Rosalind Phebe indeed might fall in love; and a Phebe must love a man.

Nor are the perfection of Rosalind's disguise and the concealment of her sex from the eyes of her companions important only in regard to her supposed relations with them. It is essential to the development of her character, and even to the real significance of what

she says and does. The character of Rosalind plainly took shape in Shakespeare's mind from the situations in which he found her. The problem which he, in the making of an entertaining play, unconsciously solved was this: Given a woman in such situations, what manner of woman must she be to win the man she loves, to charm her friends, to defy respectfully her usurping uncle, and to bewilder, bewitch, and delight her lover, meeting him in the disguise of a man? And what sort of woman must she be to do all this with the respect, the admiration, and the sympathy of every man, and moreover of every woman, in the world that looks on from the other side of the foot-lights, which are the flaming barrier about that enchanted ground, the Forest of Arden?

The woman that he made to do all this had, first of all, her large and bounteous personal beauty. But this, although a great step toward winning such wide admiration and sympathy, is but one step. It is hardly necessary to say that it is Rosalind's character, revealed under the extraordinary circumstances in which she is placed, that makes her the most charming, the most captivating, of all Shakespeare's women; one only, the peerless Imogen, excepted. Now Rosalind's character is composed mainly of three elements, too rarely found in harmonious combination: a proneness to love, which must plainly be called amorousness; a quickness of wit and a sense of humor which are the most uncommon intellectual traits of her sex; and combined with these, tempering them, elevating them, glorifying them, a certain quality which can only be called an intense womanliness, a muliebrity, which radiates from her and fills the air around her with the influence — like a subtle and delicate but penetrating

perfume — of her sex. Her distinctive quality, that which marks her off from all the rest of Shakespeare's women, is her sense of wit and humor, in combination with her womanliness. Others of his women, notably Viola and Imogen, are as loving, as tender, and as womanly. No other is witty and humorous and womanly too; for example, notably, Beatrice, who is very witty, but not very womanly, nor indeed very loving.

Now the position in which Rosalind figures in the four acts which pass in the Forest of Arden brings out, as it would seem no other could bring out, her wittiness and her humorousness in direct relation to and combination with her sensitive, tender, and passionful nature. Rosalind, for all her soft, sweet apprehensiveness and doubt about Orlando's value of that which she has given to him before he had shown that he desired it, enjoys the situation in which she is placed. She sees the fun of it, as Celia, for example, hardly sees it; and she relishes it with the keenest appetite. If that situation is not emphasized for the spectators of her little mysterious mask of love by what is, for them, the absolute and perfectly probable and natural deception of Orlando, Rosalind lacks the very reason of her being. To enjoy what she does and what she is, to give her our fullest sympathy, we must not be called upon to make believe very hard that Orlando does not see she is the woman that he loves; while at the same time we must see that he feels that around this saucy lad there is floating a mysterious atmosphere of tenderness, of enchanting fancy, and of a most delicate sensitiveness. Moreover, we must see that Rosalind herself is at rest about her incognito, and that she can say her tender,

witty, boy-masked sayings undisturbed by the least consciousness that Orlando's eyes can see through the doublet and hose, which at once become her first concern, her instant thought, when she is told plainly that he is in the Forest of Arden.

The perfection of her disguise is thus essential to the higher purpose of the comedy. Rosalind was fair; but after having seen her in her brilliant beauty at the court of her usurping uncle, we must be content, as she was, to see it browned to the hue of forest exposure, and deprived of all the pretty coquetries of personal adornment which sit so well upon her sex, and to find in her, our very selves, the outward seeming of a somewhat overbold and soldierly young fellow, who is living, half shepherd, half hunter, in welcomed companionship with a band of gentlemanly outlaws. Unless all this is set very clearly and unmistakably before us by the physical and merely external appearance of our heroine, there is an incongruity fatal to the idea of the comedy, and directly at variance with the clearly defined intentions of its writer.

That incongruity always exists in a greater or less degree in the performance of all the Rosalinds of the stage. I can make no exception. In case of the best Rosalinds I have ever seen, the supposition that Orlando was deceived, or that any other man could be deceived, in the sex of Ganymede was absurd, preposterous. They all dress the page in such a way, they all play the page in such a way, that his womanhood is salient. It looks from his eye, it is spoken from his lips, just as plainly as it is revealed by his walk and by the shape and action of the things he walks with. That they should dress the part with

female coquetry is, if not laudable, at least admissible, excusable. The highest sense of art is perhaps not powerful enough to lead a woman to lay aside, before assembled hundreds, all the graces peculiar to her sex; but surely no artist, who at this stage of the world's appreciation of Shakespeare ventures to undertake the representation of this character, ought to fail in an apprehension of its clearly and simply defined external traits, or in the action by which those traits are revealed.

It is the function of comedy to present an ideal of human life in a lightly satirical and amusing form. A comedy without wit, without humor, without the occasion of laughter, — not necessarily boisterous, nor even hearty, — fails as a comedy, although it may not be without interest as a drama. "As You Like It" is supremely successful in this respect. It does not provoke loud laughter; I believe that I never heard a "house laugh" at any performance of it at which I was present; but during its last four acts we listen to it with gently smiling hearts. It is filled with the atmosphere of dainty fun. Rosalind herself enjoys the fun of her strange position; she delights in her own humorous sallies almost, if not quite, as much as Falstaff revels in his. She is divided between the pleasure which she derives from the mystification of Orlando and the sweet trouble of her desire to make sure of his love.

Now this peculiar trait of her character cannot be fully developed unless she carries out to the utmost extreme her assumption of manhood, while she is in Orlando's company. To him she must indeed seem as if she had "a doublet and hose in her disposition." She must not lift a corner even of her mental gar-

ments, to show him the woman's heart that is trembling underneath. She wheedles him into making love to her (by a contrivance somewhat transparent to us, it is true, but not so easily seen through by him, and which, at any rate, must be accepted as a necessary condition of the action of the play), but the slightest attempt at open love-making to him on her part is ruinous; it destroys at once the humor and even the charm of the situation. We see at once that it would have startled Orlando, and opened his eyes very wide indeed. And yet she must show us, who are in her secret, all the time "how many fathom deep she is in love." That outbreak of tender anxiety when she suddenly asks him, "But are you so much in love as your rhymes speak?" reveals everything to us, who know everything already; but to Orlando it is a very simple and natural question. *He* need not understand the sad, sweet earnestness of the inquiry. True, indeed, she does with woman's art contrive in some mysterious way that Orlando shall kiss the youth whom he in sport doth call his Rosalind, which, because of the kissing customs of those days, she might bring about more easily and safely than she could now. But Shakespeare is wisely content to let us know by her own sweet well-kissed lips, that this act of her vicarious love-making has been duly and repeatedly performed. It takes place in secret, in some of those interviews which he did not venture to set before our eyes, so instinctively cautious was he not to break down the illusion which is the very heart and centre of this delightful work of dramatic art. Incongruity is an essential element of the ridiculous; and the humor of the action of the play (apart from its words) consists in the constantly presented

inconsistency between Rosalind's external appearance and her inward feeling. She must seem to Orlando, and she must seem *to us* (although we know to the contrary) to be a young man, or we lose the humor of half that she says and does, which she herself enjoys with a zest quite as great as ours. This trait of her character, mentioned before, cannot be too strongly insisted upon. It is shown in her answer to her father (which she tells to Celia), who asked her of what parentage she was. "I told him," she replies, "of as good as he." Now Rosalind took great delight in thus "chaffing" her own father. The absurdity of the situation, the preposterousness of the question from him to her, and the humor of her answer made her eyes dance with pleasure. Viola and Imogen wore their doublets and hose with a difference.

For these reasons the complete disguise of Rosalind, her absolute sinking of her feminine personality, is of the utmost importance in the effective representation of this play. Must I say, however, that this matter of external seeming, although of unusual moment and significance, is but the mere material condition and starting-point of the action, which reveals to us the soul and mind of this captivating woman, in whom tenderness and archness, passion and purity, are ever striving with each other, and whose wit and waywardness are ever controlled in the end by innate modesty? And by modesty I do not mean either chastity or shame; which I say, because the three things are by so many people strangely and injuriously confounded. Rosalind, we may be sure, was chaste; Orlando had no cause of trouble on that score. But as an ideal woman, she was as far above the belittling

of common shame as a Greek goddess. But, besides her chastity, she was modest. Modesty is a graceful distrust of one's own value and importance, and is quite as frequently found in men as in women. Women thoroughly unchaste are not infrequently enchantingly modest; women as chaste as she-dragons (if she-dragons are particularly distinguished for this virtue) are often ungraciously immodest. And so it is with the inferior and conventionally limited sensation — I cannot call it sentiment — of shame. Women who are both unchaste and immodest have in many cases a shrinking bodily shame (determined mostly, if not absolutely, by the custom of their day), which is thoughtlessly lacking in some women of true purity and of the sweetest and most winning modesty of soul.

To return to Rosalind. It will be found that, notwithstanding her readiness to put a man's clothes upon her body and a man's boldness over her heart, notwithstanding her very plain speech upon subjects which nowadays many a harlot would wince at, the real Rosalind, underneath that saucy, swaggering, booted-and-sworded outside, was sweetly modest; and that, notwithstanding her birth and her beauty, and the mental superiority of which she must have been conscious, she was doubting all the while whether she was worthy of the love of such a man as Orlando, and thinking with constant alarm of that more than half confession that she had made, unwooed, to him upon the wrestling-ground. The absolute incongruity between the real Rosalind and the seeming Ganymede is the very essence of the comedy of her situation. One example of this, which I have never seen properly emphasized upon the stage: At the end of the first in-

terview with Orlando in the Forest, after she has wheedled him into wooing her as Rosalind, she asks him to go with her to her cot.

Ros. Go with me to it, and I 'll show it to you: and by the way you shall tell me where in the forest you live. Will you go?
Orl. With all my heart, good youth.
Ros. Nay, you must call me Rosalind. Come, sister, will you go?
Act III. Sc. 2.

Now here most Rosalinds go shyly off with Celia, and leave Orlando to come dangling after them; but when I read this passage I see Ganymede jauntily slip his arm into Orlando's, and lead him off, laughingly lecturing him about the name; then turn his head over his shoulder, and say, "Come, sister!" — leaving Celia astounded at the boundless "cheek" of her enamored cousin.[1]

Rosalind, poor girl, with all her strength and elasticity, is not always able to stand up firmly against the flood of emotion which pours over her heart. For example, after the mock marriage, her doubts again begin to overwhelm her, and she asks Orlando how long he would have her; a question which her situation makes touchingly pathetic. (This cry of woman for love! It would be ridiculous, if it were not so sadly, piteously earnest, amid all its pretty sweetness.) And then the doubting, half-made bride, looking forward, — in love man thinks only of the present, woman is always looking forward; for love makes her future, — utters that sad little bit of commonplace generality about man's wearying of the woman he has won and

[1] I have used the words "cheek" and "chaff," in connection with Rosalind, because they convey to us of this day the nature of her goings-on as no other words would: and Shakespeare himself, who always treats slang respectfully, although he contemns and despises cant, would be the first to pardon me.

has possessed, thinking, plainly, all the while of herself and what may come to her; when suddenly, recollecting her part, and that she is in danger of showing what she really is, she breaks sharply off, and with rapid raillery and shrewish accent she pours out upon him that mock threat, beginning, "I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen." And again in this scene, when Orlando parts from her, and promises to return in two hours, her badinage wavers very doubtfully between jest and earnest, between humor and sentiment; but she catches herself before she falls, and beginning, "By my troth, and in good earnest, and so God mend me," and so forth, again takes refuge in exaggerated menaces of her coming displeasure.

All this is charming, even when but tolerably well set forth, and by such Rosalinds as we customarily see upon the stage; but how much it usually falls short of the effect which Shakespeare imagined can be known only to those who can see that in the mind's eye, or who shall see it, some time, in reality.

On the other hand, our stage Rosalinds are not womanly enough when they are out of sight of Orlando and of other men; when, indeed, from reaction and relaxed nerves, they should be womanly even unto womanishness. When Rosalind is with Celia she is the more woman-like of the two; the more capricious, sensitive, tender, passionful, apprehensive. It is Celia, then, who, after her mild fashion, assumes the wit and the female cynic. But our stage Rosalinds give us a lukewarm rendering of both phases of the behavior of the real Rosalind. They offer us one epicene monster, instead of two natural creatures. They are too woman-like when they are with Orlando, and too man-

like when they are with Celia. And when is it that we have seen a stage Rosalind that showed us what the Rosalind of our imagination felt at the sight of the bloody handkerchief? I never saw but one: Mrs. Charles Kean. The last that I saw behaved much as if Oliver had shown her a beetle, which she feared might fly upon her; and in the end she turned and clung to Celia's shoulder. But as Oliver tells his story the blood of the real Rosalind runs curdling from her brain to her heart, and she swoons away, — falls like one dead, to be caught by the wondering Oliver. Few words are spoken, because few are needed; but this swoon is no brief incident: and Rosalind recovers only to be led off by the aid of Oliver and Celia. And here the girl again makes an attempt to assert her manhood. She insists that she counterfeited, and repeats her assertion. Then here again the stage Rosalinds all fail to present her as she is. They say "counterfeit" with at least some trace of a sly smile, and as if they did not quite expect or wholly desire Oliver to believe them. But Rosalind was in sad and grievous earnest. Never word that she uttered was more sober and serious than her "counterfeit I assure you." And the fun of the situation, which is never absent in "As You Like It," consists in the complex of incongruity, — the absurdity of a young swashbuckler's fainting at the sight of a bloody handkerchief, the absurdity of Rosalind's protest that her swoon and deadly horror were counterfeit, combining with our knowledge of the truth of the whole matter.

All this may be very true, our gently smiling manager replies; but do you suppose that you are going to get any actress to brown her face and rig herself up so that she will actually look like a young huntsman,

and play her part so that a man might unsuspectingly take her for another man? O most verdant critic, do you not know why it is that actresses come before the public? It is for two reasons, of which it would be hard to say which is the more potent: to have the public delight in them, and to get money. It is in themselves personally that they wish to interest their audiences, not in their author or his creations; those furnish but the means and the occasion of accomplishing the former. Hence it is that in all modern plays, in all (practically) that have been written since actresses came upon the stage, the women's parts must be attractive. We cannot ask an actress under fifty years of age to (in stage phrase) "play against the house." Above all, we cannot ask an actress of less than those years to put herself, as a woman, before the house in anything but an attractive form. She must have an opportunity to exhibit herself and her "toilettes;" especially both, but particularly the latter. And, O most priggish and carping critic, with your musty notions about what Shakespeare meant, and such fusty folly, the public like it as it is. They care more to see a pretty woman, with a pretty figure, prancing saucily about the stage in silk-tights, and behaving like neither man nor woman, than they would to see a booted, doubletted, felt-hatted Rosalind, behaving now like a real man and now like a real woman.

To which the critic replies, O most sapient and worldly wise manager, I know all that; and, moreover, that it is the reason why, instead of a Rosalind of Shakespeare's making, we have that hybrid thing, the stage Rosalind.

ON THE ACTING OF IAGO.

THE civil war which ended by placing the Puritans in power, and making Oliver Cromwell King of England under the name of Lord Protector, had for one of its consequences a solution of dramatic continuity which is of great importance in the history of the English theatre. The glories of the Elizabethan drama, indeed, had faded away rapidly during the reign of Charles I., having begun to wane in the later years of his father. It was in the traditions of the stage that the break was so sudden and so complete.

In 1642 the Elizabethan school of acting came to an end with the compulsory closing of the theatres; and although only eighteen years elapsed before they were reopened, in that time not only had all the old school of actors passed away, but with them had disappeared the taste which they had formed. At the return of Charles II. the theatres were reopened; but the old English drama was not revived. Shakespeare's plays, Beaumont and Fletcher's, Jonson's, were not performed. A new drama appeared in England, that known as the drama of the Restoration, — a base thing, witty but flimsy, and as devoid of real humor as of serious strength; and with it came a new school of acting. Consequently, when, after many years of smut and smirk, Shakespeare's plays began to be performed again, the actors were thrown wholly upon

their own resources; they were without any guide to the conception of his characters. Their predecessors before the Commonwealth had the benefit of traditions which came, during an interval of little more than twenty-five years, directly down from Shakespeare himself, and which, but for that great political and social upturning of England, would have remained unbroken to the present day. The new school of actors were obliged, in theatrical phrase, to "create" the Shakespearean characters anew, without the guidance of the dramatist, who in almost all cases, it need hardly be said, has a formative influence upon the first presentation of his personages to the public.

Hence there was a great loss to the world; for the traditions of the stage are among the most enduring of immaterial things. How enduring they are, even as to minute points, is shown by evidence which is clear and unmistakable in regard to a trifling piece of stage "business" in "Hamlet." In the scene of that tragedy in which the imagined appearance of the Ghost interrupts the interview between Hamlet and his mother, it was the modern custom, until very lately, for the Prince to spring from his seat with such violence as to throw down the chair on which he was sitting. Now in 1709 Nicolas Rowe published the first edited collection of Shakespeare's plays; and each play had a frontispiece illustrating one of its most conspicuous scenes. The frontispiece to "Hamlet" illustrates the scene in question, and shows us Hamlet in an enormous flowing wig, startled out of his propriety, and his chair flung down in the foreground. We thus see that even this little trick was handed down from actor to actor, and held its place upon the stage for more than a hundred and fifty years. In all

plays that have kept the stage for a long time there are traditional points not only like this, but of a more subtle and more important sort in regard both to character and action, which, without affecting the individuality of the principal actors, perpetuate certain traits and outlines of the visible play, and which we may be sure had more or less the approval of the author, many of them, doubtless, being of his suggestion. It is thus that Molière's and Corneille's and Racine's dramas are performed at the Théâtre Français. And but for the interruption caused by the civil war, and the success of the Puritans, we may be sure that we should have had Shakespeare's own notions of his personages handed down to us from actor to actor. For he was not only the author of his plays (although some folk will have it that they were written for him by Bacon), but an actor in them: he was on the stage, ready to give direction and suggestion to his brother actors who assumed the principal parts. The loss of these traditions is irreparable and deplorable.

Among the personages of his dramas who have suffered by this loss, and who are presented as he did not conceive them, are Jaques in "As You Like It," and the Fool in "King Lear." There has been no greater affront to common sense than the usual presentation of this Fool upon the stage as a boy, except the putting a pretty woman into the part, dressed in such a way as to captivate the eye and divert the attention by the beauty of her figure. It is disturbing enough to see Ariel, sexless, but, like the angels, rather masculine than feminine, represented by a woman dressed below the waist in an inverted gauze saucer, and above the waist in a perverted gauze nothing; but to see Lear's Fool thus travestied is more amazing than Bottom's brutal trans-

lation was to his fellow actors. This Fool is a man of middle age, one who has watched the world and grown sad over it. His jesting has a touch of heart-break in it which is prevented from becoming pathetic only by the cynicism which pertains partly to his personal character and partly to his office. He and Kent are about of an age — Kent, who when asked his age, as he comes back disguised to his old master, says, "Not so young as to love a woman for her singing, nor so old as to dote on her for anything; I have years on my back forty-eight" — a speech which contains one of the finest of Shakespeare's minor touches of worldly-wise character drawing.

Jaques, as we see him on the stage, is a sentimental young man, who wanders about the Forest of Arden, mooning and maundering in a soft and almost silly way; a sweet-voiced young fellow, with dark eyes and dark curls, who is pitiful of wounded stags, and given to moods of tender melancholy; a moralizing dandy, whom the real Jaques would have made the butt of his ridicule. Shakespeare's Jaques is an elderly man of the world, a selfish, worn out, captious, crusty, clever cynic. In person he should be represented as a portly man of some sixty years of age, with gray in his beard, a head partly bald, and a constant sneer upon his lips. This view of his character has been generally accepted of late years by critics of Shakespeare, although no actor has had the hardihood to displace the traditionary young sentimentalist of the stage, and give us the elderly cynic that Shakespeare conceived and wrought out with his finest skill. The modern stage tradition as to Jaques had its origin at a time — more than a hundred years after Shakespeare's death — when "As You Like It" began to

come upon the stage again, and when the word melancholy had been narrowed in its significance. We may be sure that but for the civil war and the Puritans, tradition would have given us a Jaques of a very different character.

A much greater — we cannot say grander or nobler — conception of Shakespeare's has suffered in like manner from the interruption of the traditions of the Elizabethan stage. I mean Iago. It cannot be that the Iago of the modern stage is, either in external appearance or in his characteristic traits, the man who deceived and betrayed Desdemona, Cassio, and Othello. Iago, as Shakespeare presents him to any careful and thoughtful student of the tragedy, is entirely unlike the coarse although crafty villain who has held possession of the stage from the time of the revival of the Shakespearean drama until the present day. The latter is a creature of conventional and theatrical traits of person and of action, whom Shakespeare would not have allowed to occupy the stage for a single scene. Most of the Iagos that I have had the opportunity of observing — I cannot say of studying, for they were of such rude making, were such mere animated human formulas, that they neither required nor admitted study — would not have deceived a school-girl. Desdemona would have been far beyond their shallow scheming, and Othello would have brushed them out of the way with a back blow of his mailed hand. Even the best of them, although gifted and accomplished men, failed entirely to apprehend Shakespeare's ideal of this master villain of the world's literature.

The worst Iago probably that ever appeared was he who played "ancient" to the greatest of Othellos, Sal-

vini, on his first visit to the United States. Upon this Iago Othello would have set his heel in their first interview and crushed him out of existence like a noisome venomous reptile, — an insect; for he had not the dignity of a vertebrate animal. And yet this actor merely presented in a very complete and much elaborated way the common stage conception of the evil genius of the great tragedy. That conception is a subtle, fawning, crawling hypocrite, who, for some not very apparent reason, wishes to do as much harm as he can, and who accomplishes his ends by unscrupulous lying of more or less ingenuity. The character of this personage rests upon the foundations of malice and hypocrisy; and the object of those who represent him is to present an embodiment of malice and hypocrisy, pure and simple. The result is a very exaggerated form of a very commonplace scoundrel. Salvini's ancient was quite perfect of his kind, and therefore attained the eminence of being the most insufferable and aggressively offensive Iago that ever trod the stage. He managed in dress and in carriage, as well as in face, so to advertise his malice, and above all his hypocrisy, that he was in very deed the most loathsome creature, morally and physically, that I ever looked upon. Such a caitiff Iago was in soul, but not in seeming.

Before going on to consider the various passages of the tragedy which indicate Shakespeare's conception of this personage — hardly inferior to any of his creations in its union of complexity and strength, and perhaps the most widely known of all of them as a type — it may be well to describe the real Iago, who, so far as my knowledge goes, has never been presented on the modern stage.

Iago was a young man, only twenty-eight years old, the youngest of all the men who figure in the tragedy, excepting, possibly, Roderigo. He says of himself that he has looked upon the world for four times seven years. Brave, and a good soldier, he was also of that order of ability which lifts a man speedily above his fellows. His manners and his guise were of a dashing military sort; and his manner had a corresponding bluntness, tempered, at times, by tact to a warm-hearted effusiveness, — by the very tact which prompted the bluntness. For that, although not exactly assumed, was consciously adopted. Nevertheless, he had little spontaneous malice in his composition; and unless for some good reason he would rather serve than injure those around him. He made himself liked by all, and was regarded not only as a man of great ability in his profession and of sagacity in affairs, but as a warm-hearted, "whole-souled" man, and the very prince of good fellows. Being all this, and being genial and sympathetic, he was eminently popular. He was, moreover, a heartless, selfish, cold-blooded, unprincipled, and utterly unscrupulous scoundrel.

It was because he was this manner of man that he was able to work that woeful ruin in which the love of Othello and Desdemona ends, — a ruin which in its extremity, however, he did not plan, and did not at first desire. In fact, he had no inclination to do needless harm to any one; he would not have gone out of his way to tread upon a worm if it had kept out of *his* way, and been no barrier to his success in life.

It need hardly be said that no such Iago has been seen upon the stage for the last two hundred years; there is not a memory or record of him. The elder

Booth's Iago was an admirable performance, almost wonderful in its force and keeping. I saw it in my boyhood just as this great actor was staggering off the stage; and nothing equal to it have I ever seen except Rachel's performances. But it was the simple, strong representation of a hardened, crafty villain, a monster of hate and of cruelty. The climax of the whole performance was in the Parthian look which Iago, as he was borne off wounded and in bonds, gave Othello, — a Gorgon stare, in which hate seemed both petrified and petrifying. It was frightful.

Edwin Booth's conception of the character, although not so clear and strong, is finer, more delicate, and more complex. His Iago is not externally a mere hardened villain, but a super-subtle Venetian, who works out his fiendish plans with a dexterous lightness of touch and smooth simosity of movement that suggest the transmigration of a serpent into human form. And in his visage, and above all in his eye, burn the venom of his soul; which makes his face at times look snake-like, as we say, — erroneously, however; for the eyes of a snake do not burn and flash; on the contrary, they have their hideous look because of a dull and stony malignaney of expression. But even Edwin Booth's Iago, although much finer and more nearly consistent with itself and with the facts of the tragedy than any other that is known to the annals of the stage, is not the Iago that Shakespeare drew, and whose lineaments, moral and physical, have just been set before the reader. The chief cause of the general failure to present this character truly is the disposition and habit of the stage — a disposition and habit not unknown to real life — to divide men into classes, and to regard them individually as the embodiment of

some one passion, or motive, or type of character. Iago *is* a crafty hypocrite; and therefore the stage has sought to set before us his hypocrisy and his craft in such a manner that they in combination are Iago. The best Iago of the modern stage is hypocrisy and craft embodied, as we have just seen, and he is nothing else. Now the truth is that the embodiment of such a simple combination of moral baseness and mental subtlety was not in Shakespeare's mind, and is a quite impossible agent and element of the confusion and disaster of the tragedy.

The most strongly marked external traits of Shakespeare's Iago, the Iago who was known in Venice and rose rapidly in general favor there, were honesty and a warm heart: honesty of the kind which is notably outspoken and trustworthy; warmth of heart which seems to have sympathy for all men, not only in all their hopes and sorrows, but in all their little likings and small personal vanities. Is there any wonder that such a man was popular and got on in the world, — that he was in favor with the best and greatest? For he was not a mere flatterer, however skilful. The most marked trait in this bold soldier's character was his good faith. As if with a premonition of the coming misconception and misrepresentation of his creature, and to put his seeming character beyond misapprehension, Shakespeare applies the epithet "honest" to him no less than sixteen times in the course of the tragedy. Such a description — we may almost say such a labelling — of another of his personages is not to be found in all the multitude that throng through his thirty-seven dramas. And this is the more worthy of note because in the Italian story out of which the play was made there is no hint of this trait to Iago's char-

acter, nor indeed of any of his complex moral and mental constitution. He is absolutely and exclusively Shakespeare's conception. His trustworthiness, because of his truthful nature and his warm and friendly heart, is to those around him the attractive trait of his character up to, and even past, the catastrophe which his cruelly indifferent selfishness brings about. Othello, after he has killed Desdemona, pauses in his agony to call his tormentor and destroyer "my *friend*, honest, honest Iago." All the principal personages of the tragedy, Desdemona and Cassio included, thus regard him; although Cassio, himself a soldier, is most impressed by Iago's personal bravery and military ability. In speaking of him, he not being present, the lieutenant calls him "the bold Iago," and in his presence says to Desdemona that she "may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar." But Othello was chiefly attracted by his honesty and kindly nature. He speaks of him to the Senate as a man "of honesty and trust," calls him "most honest," says he is of "*exceeding* honesty," and indeed shows in all his conversation with him his absolute unquestioning reliance upon his good faith, — a good faith which is not mere uncontaminated purity from deceit, but an active, benevolent honesty, which seeks the best good of others.

For loving-kindness was hardly less than honesty an attractive feature of Iago's external character. Othello constantly speaks of the love that he finds in his "ancient." His sympathies are always ready, always manifest. When Cassio is involved in the brawl, Othello, in the first outburst of his wrath, says: —

> *Honest* Iago, that *look'st dead with grieving*,
> Speak, who began this? On thy *love*, I charge thee.
>
> Act II. Sc. 3.

The man deceived even his wife; for she, speaking the next day to Desdemona of Cassio's disgrace, says, —

> I warrant it grieves my husband
> As if the case were his.
>
> Act III. Sc. 3.

Now it is plain that Iago had no particular reason or occasion to deceive his wife on this point. He merely showed to her what he showed to everybody, a readiness to sympathize with the joys and sorrows and wishes of those around him. Emilia, a woman of the world, a woman of experiences, who knew her husband better than many wives know theirs, is yet imposed upon by this skin-deep warmth and surface glow of his character. It is not until the climax of the tragedy that even she is undeceived.

In the eyes of his friends and acquaintances Iago was not merely an honest man and a good-natured one, after the semblance of ordinary honesty and good nature. These traits were salient in him; they distinguished him from other men. And they were his noted peculiarities of character among his acquaintances *long before he had any temptation to reveal his real and inner nature*, which, until the temptation came, was possibly but half known to himself, although indeed he had a certain consciousness of it in his feeling of instinctive aversion to the sweetness and nobility of soul showed in Cassio's daily life. The occasion that revealed him completely to himself was the elevation of Cassio to the lieutenancy, — this being a place second in rank to that of a general officer.

For this honest, warm-hearted, effusively sympathetic man was a soldier of such approved valor and capacity, and so highly regarded, that when the lieutenant-generalship became vacant, notable men of

Venice concerned themselves to have the young officer promoted to the place; for which they made personal suit to Othello, — an incident which in itself shows not only Iago's military distinction, but his success in attaching others to his interests. And Shakespeare, as if to put the full complement of Iago's personal gifts beyond a question (he gives to Iago's character a particularity of description as rare with him as that which he gives to Imogen's beauty), makes Othello say of him that he "knows all qualities, with a learned spirit of human dealings." Indeed, there is hardly a man of Shakespeare's making, except Hamlet, who is set before us as possessing the manifold personal gifts, accomplishments, and attractions which won for Iago the distinction and favor which he enjoyed in the highest society of Venice.

As to the make of him, and what he really was, Iago by a very evident special design of the dramatist reveals himself fully in the first scene. After setting forth the promotion of Cassio as the cause of his ill-will to Othello, and expressing his contempt for such honest knaves (that is, merely such honest serving-men) as do their duty for duty's sake, he says, —

> Others there are
> Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
> Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,
> And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
> Do well thrive by them, and when they have lin'd their coats
> Do themselves homage. These fellows have some soul;
> And such a one do I profess myself.
>
> Act I. Sc. 1.

And again, in his soliloquy at the end of the first act, he shows us the same selfish, unscrupulous nature, but no disposition to malice, or even to needless mischief, — only a cruel heartlessness. Even the Roderigos of the world would have remained unharmed by him, un-

less he could have gained something by their injury. The very man who "makes a corner" in stocks or in provisions, by which he ruins the acquaintance with whom he dined yesterday and brings unknown widows and children to want, is not freer from personal malice towards his victims than Iago was from ill-will towards his. He would much rather have attained his ends by doing them a service. But let a worm or a friend bar his way, and he would rack and rend the one just as quickly and coolly as he would crush the other.

Some other traits of Iago's character, which are manifested incidentally, notably a certain coarseness, and a lack of any tenderness or sentiment towards women, or any faith even in the best of them, I pass by with mere allusion; although those which I have now particularly mentioned are made by Shakespeare, with a great master's subtleness and truth, marked elements in the composition of such a man.

In the creation of Iago the author of Othello had, as I have already remarked, no help or hint from the story out of which he made his tragedy, nor from any precedent play, so far as we know, — a rare isolation and originality in Shakespeare's personages. The Iago of the Italian story is a coarse, commonplace villain, who differs from Shakespeare's Iago in this very point: that he *is* a morose, malicious creature. His soul is full of hatred; he *has* the innate spontaneous malignity which some critics have found in Iago, and have attributed to the creative powers of Shakespeare, but which Shakespeare's creation is entirely and notably without.

It was no mere villain, however black, no mere embodiment of cruelty, however fiendish, that Shakespeare saw in his idea of Iago. In that conception

and in its working out he had a much more instructing, if not instructive, purpose. Such a purpose he seldom seems to have; nor does his own feeling toward his evil creatures manifest itself except on very rare occasions, and then slightly and by implication. But upon Iago he manifestly looked with loathing and with horror, although he spent upon him the utmost powers of his creative art.

In Iago Shakespeare has presented a character that could not have escaped his observation; for it is of not uncommon occurrence except in one of its elements, — utter unscrupulousness. But for this, Iago would be a representative type, — representative of the gifted, scheming, plausible, and pushing man, who gets on by the social art known as making friends. This man is often met with in society. Sometimes he is an adventurer, like Iago, but most commonly he is not; and that he should be so is not necessary to the perfection of his character. The difference in social conduct between him and a genuine man is that this one is simply himself, and forms friendships (not too many) with those whom he likes and those who, taking him as they find him, like him; while the other lays himself out to make friends, doing so not always with the direct and specific purpose of establishing a social connection, but because it is his nature to; as the sea monster which preys upon its own kind throws out its alluring bait which is part of itself, whether there are fellow-fish in sight or not. This is not only his way of getting on, but his way of going through life. He accomplishes his purpose somewhat by flattery, of course, but less by direct flattery than by an ever-springing sympathy, and a readiness to help others in the little affairs in which their vanity or their pleasure is concerned.

Sympathy in purposes and tastes is the finest, subtlest, most insidious flattery; the lack of it repels shallow souls and thoughtless minds as surely as a rock will turn aside a shallow brook, — and how many men are there who are not shallow, and who do think? As to helpfulness, you may be ready to watch with men when they are ill, to fight for them when they are in peril, to relieve them when they are in trouble; but if you are careless about their little vanities and their little pleasures, you will be set down by most of them as ill-natured, selfish, and cold-hearted. The opportunities of doing real service are rare; the union of opportunity and ability is still rarer; but every day brings occasion to gratify the prurience of your neighbor's vanity by the tickling of direct flattery, or to soothe it with the soft caress of seeming sympathy. The men who become popular, the women who achieve social success (except by the brute force of sheer money), are not those who are ready to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, or who have in their hearts that charity which seeketh not its own, which thinketh no evil, but which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; they are rather they who do seek their own, and who think much evil, but who are ready to minister to the vanity and to serve the interests of those around them. And chiefly they are the former; for not only are opportunities of service, even in small matters, comparatively rare, but the memory of service, substantial although it be, is not fed upon daily, like the words and sympathetic acts that are so hungrily swallowed into the bottomless maw of human vanity. He who once promoted his friend's interest in a serious matter is less sure of being remembered

with pleasure and gratitude than he who daily burns sweet-smelling incense before his nostrils.

Therefore, if you would get on, if you would make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, — as, if you are provident, you will, — if you would become popular, flatter; flatter in every way, by word and deed; flatter everybody, without discrimination. For although this ought to make your praise actually worthless, even as flattery, the number of those who will remember anything else than this sign of your good-will to them, and their pleasure while they were in the company of such a warm-hearted and truly appreciative person as you are will be so small that, in reckoning the social forces which you have to manœuvre, they need not be counted. Nor let your flattery stop with words. Be ready to further all the little projects of your acquaintances in which their personal vanity is involved. Help your stupid, pompous, ambitious friend to a place on a committee that will bring his name into print in a desirable connection. Do all you can to make the receptions of his awkward, vulgar, overdressed wife brilliant, and — yet more important — do all that you can to make her believe that they are brilliant. If to such charming social qualities you can add a reputation for candor and good faith, — which you can do by your art, if you are worthy of the highest social honors, and in which you will be aided by the readiness of people to believe in the candor of such an appreciative and sympathetic person as you are, — you will attain the height of popularity, and find all around you ready to promote your interests and rejoice in your good fortune. You will have made everybody your friend.

This sort of friend-maker is, as I have said, common

enough; but he rarely attains perfection, because he is rarely able to prevent his own personal likings and dislikings from influencing his conduct in some degree, and dulling the flavor of his flattery, or checking the effusiveness of his sympathy. He has, however, one quality in which he is complete: he is thoroughly selfish, — to the bottom of his soul. Amid all his good-fellowship, his conviviality, with all his heartiness of manner, his cheering speeches, and his ready sympathy, he has a sharp outlook for his own interest. The one constant thought of his life is to get on. This man who falls in with your humor, who slaps you (morally, if not physically) on the back, who makes you feel so well satisfied with yourself, and who is so ready to help you, if not to that which you really need, to that which you vainly fancy, — if not to the favor of Desdemona, to that of Bianca, — has a single eye to his own advantage and his own profit. Watch him, and see how he prospers. See how, although he makes friends of all, he attaches himself to the powerful, the rich, the successful; but chiefly see how he uses all, rich and poor, great and small, for his own advancement. Watch him closely enough, and you will discover that this genial fellow, who radiates loving-kindness, is at heart stonily indifferent to anything but self.

It was this kind of man that Shakespeare chose as the type of supremest villany. His Iago is first and chiefly the most popular young man in Venice. He has assiduously made himself so, because he knows that all his ability (which he does not in the least overrate) will not help him on so much as popularity will; and that popularity brings not only success in the long run, but immediate opportunities of gain.

He makes friends everywhere, — with the great ones of the state, but no less with the Roderigos. He wins everybody to trust him, in matters good and bad indifferently, that their confidence may be his profit.

Thus far Iago's character is one not rare in any society nor at any time. Yet it has been misapprehended; and the cause of its misapprehension is the one element in which it is peculiar. Iago is troubled with no scruples, absolutely none. He has intellectual perceptions of right and wrong, but he is utterly without the moral sense. He has but one guide of conduct, — self-interest. We hear it said of this or that man that his ruling motive is self-interest, and that he is unscrupulous. But, fortunately for the world, men who are wholly without scruples, and who know no other guide of conduct than self-interest, are so very rare that few of us have the opportunity of observing them. Very selfish and very unscrupulous men we may all see. We may suffer from them ourselves; and if we do not we may loathe them for their cruel disregard of the interests and the happiness of others, when these clash with their interests or their pleasures. But almost all such men have a limit, if not to their selfishness, at least to their moral unscrupulousness. They will be very bold and very disregardful of right and wrong up to a certain point; and that may be near the vanishing point of moral sense. But there is a degree of moral recklessness at which they stop; and the consequence frequently is failure and sometimes ruin, — failure and ruin which might have been turned into success by pushing past the scruple, and disregarding everything, everything but the selfish end in view. Well for the world's peace that it is so. For if to ability a man unites thorough unscrupulous-

ness, there is no limit to the evil he may do; absolutely none, except the limit which is put by the end of *him*.

Now to his ability, his popular manners, his reputation for honesty and courage, and his supreme selfishness Iago added that great accomplishment and perfection of complete villany, an absolute indifference to right and wrong. It was mere indifference. He had no special preference for wrong-doing. If by doing right he could have prospered as well as by doing wrong, he would have done right, because right-doing is more respectable and popular and less troublesome than wrong-doing. But for right and wrong in themselves he had neither like nor dislike; and there was no limit to the degree of wrong that he was ready to do to attain his ends, — this fellow of exceeding honesty, who knew all qualities with a discerning spirit, and whose daily life was an expression of love and sympathy. And his capacity of evil was passive as well as active. He did not quite like it (for some unexplained reason) that there was reason to suspect his wife with Othello; but yet he had borne the scandal prudently, lest resentment might interfere with his promotion. But when Cassio was made his general's lieutenant the disappointed man coolly reckoned the former fact as one of the motives of his action. His main purpose, however, indeed his only real purpose, was to ruin Cassio and get his place. As the readiest and the most thorough method of ruining Cassio was to ruin Desdemona with him, well: Desdemona must be ruined, and there an end; no more words about the matter. But her ruin in this way must surely involve her death at Othello's hands. Well, then she must be murdered by her husband;

that's all. But this would torture Othello. No matter. All the better, perhaps, — serve him right for preferring that theorizing military dandy to the place which belonged to a better soldier.

Iago, however, had no thought of driving Othello to suicide. Far from it. Had he supposed the train he laid would have exploded in that catastrophe, he would at least have sought his end by other means. For Othello was necessary to him. He wanted the lieutenancy; and he was willing to ruin a regiment of Cassios, and to cause all the senators' daughters in Venice to be smothered, if that were necessary to his end. But otherwise he would not have stepped out of his path to do them the slightest injury; nay, rather would have done them some little service, said some pretty thing, shown some attaching sympathy, that would have been an item in the sum of his popularity. There is no mistaking Shakespeare's intention in the delineation of this character. He meant him for a most attractive, popular, good-natured, charming, selfish, cold-blooded and utterly unscrupulous scoundrel. The fact that pains are taken to show us that his very wife had confidence to the last not only in the goodness of his heart, but, notwithstanding his suspicions of her (which she well knew), in his good faith to Othello, can have but one meaning and one purpose.

As to the presentation of Iago on the stage, the indications are that it should be somewhat in this wise: His make-up and costume should be that of a dashing young military officer. In the first act he should wear velvet and lace. In the second, when he lands from the ship, he should be in armor, — breastplate and back-piece, cuirasses, vant-bras, and gorget, which he should retain throughout this act;

nor afterwards should he be without a marked military exterior. His manner and bearing should be remarkable for ease, frankness, and an overflowing kindness; and in particular he should be gay in a soldierly and slightly blunt fashion. He should seem to carry the lightest heart of all the personages of the drama, and should be the last one of them whom a spectator uninformed as to the nature and story of the play would suppose to have an evil design or a selfish purpose, but, on the contrary, the one whom such a person would pick out as the warmest hearted, the most trustworthy, and the merriest of them all. His manner towards Othello should be that of a subordinate to a heroic superior whom he loves and almost worships. To Desdemona he should bear himself with a mixture of deference, admiration, and coarse masculine cynicism. To Cassio he should behave like a brother in arms, with perhaps an occasional slight excess of deference to his superior officer, indicative of the jealousy that rankles in his bosom. To Emilia he should carry himself with a blunt and over-topping marital good-nature. And he should avoid all side glances of spite and hate and suspicion; and except when he is quite alone, and communing with himself, no one either off the stage or on it should see the slightest reason to suspect that he is a villain, or to doubt the genuineness of his gayety and good-nature. It is worthy of remark that in the carousal scene, in the beginning of the second act, he is the gayest of all. He alone sings a drinking-song; and soon again he sings a jolly ballad. His is the only singing voice heard in the course of the drama, except poor Desdemona's. His distinguishing external traits are sincerity, warmth of heart, and a light-hearted, soldierly

gayety. His utter baseness and cold cruelty of soul should appear in the heartiness and simplicity of his manner in the scenes in which he tempts and tortures Othello, and in the quick alternation between his friendly and sympathetic interviews with Roderigo and Cassio and his killing the one and wounding the other. Both these murders (murders in intent) were, however, merely to remove in the quickest and surest way obstacles to his purpose. His only exhibition of personal malice is in the killing his wife, who is the chief cause of the final failure of his schemes. He does not slay her with any purpose of avenging her imputed dishonor of him with the Moor; there is no such saving likeness between even the savage sides of their natures. He rather had submitted to that wrong in politic silence, willing to accept it as one of the steps in his promotion.

This is the Iago that Shakespeare drew, — a man whom he had seen, and whom we all have often seen, moving through society and making friends on every side, and who yet at bottom is utterly selfish, stony-hearted, and grasping. The dramatist added to the traits of this common type only the element of absolute unscrupulousness, which, although rare, is possibly not so rare as the course of events might lead us to suppose. The moral of Iago's part in the tragedy is: Distrust the man whose peculiar faculty, or chief desire, is to make friends. He is likely to be selfish; and if selfish he needs only temptation and opportunity to be a scoundrel.

There is but one difficulty about this presentation of Iago. I am inclined to think that the average modern theatre-goer would regard it as a tame and spiritless performance; and the business of the actor is to please the average theatre-goer.

GLOSSARIES AND LEXICONS.

WHEN, some eleven or twelve years ago, Mr. Collier's annotated second folio copy of Shakespeare's works sank finally out of sight, there was reason to hope that no further attempts would be made upon the text of that much-abused author. And indeed it may be safely assumed that no changes will hereafter be made in it of sufficient importance to bring a considerable reputation to any new editor or new edition. Since the time spoken of, two editions of note have been published; one edited by the Rev. Alexander Dyce (his second), which appeared in 1864–66, and the Cambridge edition, edited by the Rev. William George Clarke, M. A., and William Aldis Wright, both of Trinity College, the publication of which, although it began in 1863, was not finished until 1866. The latter work is the most valuable single contribution that has been made to Shakespearean literature. Its editors announced, as one of its distinctive features, that its text was based on a thorough collation of the four folios, and of all the quarto editions of the separate plays, and of subsequent editions and commentaries. In this respect, however, it does not differ from the first edition produced by the present writer.[1] The peculiar value of the Cambridge edition consists in the presentation

[1] *The Works of William Shakespeare:* the Plays edited from the folio of MDCXXIII., with various readings from all the editions and all the commentators, Notes, Introductory Remarks, a Historical Sketch of the Text, an Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Drama, a Memoir of the Poet, and an Essay upon his Genius. The date of this edition has been incorrectly given by some editors and bibliographers as 1859–65. The Comedies were published in 1857; the Histories, in 1859;

at the foot of the page, without comment, of all the various readings of every passage, whether found in the four folios, in the quartos, in subsequent editions, or proposed in the works of commentators who did not become editors, and in the printing *literatim* of the text of such quarto editions as differ so much from that accepted by the editors that the variation could not be shown in notes. The readings printed at the foot of the page are given in the order of time in which they were introduced into the text or proposed; and thus, for all ordinary purposes, even in the critical study of the text, the reader finds himself completely furnished. The text of the Cambridge edition is not intended for general readers of Shakespeare. Its editors admitted no conjectural reading because they thought it "better system or grammar or sense" than that of the folio, unless they also thought the reading of the latter "altogether impossible;" and, moreover, to be received into their text, a conjectural emendation must appear "the only probable one." If the defect can be made good in more ways than one, equally plausible or at least equally possible, they have allowed the corruption to remain intact, while the proposed emendations are offered in the footnotes to the choice of the reader. This, however, in no way diminishes the great, and it may be safely said, the inestimable value of this edition to the critical student of the poet. For him no one edition will supply its place, while it supplies the place not only of many editions, but of many books of comment besides.

Mr. Dyce's edition (1864–66) is called the second; and it is the second edition of Shakespeare that he prepared for the press. But it is not properly so styled if there is an implication that the latter work has any other connection with the former than that they both are the produc-

the Tragedies, in 1862; and the first volume, containing memoir, essays, etc., in 1865. The Comedies were published before the appearance of Mr. Dyce's first edition (in 1857), and both Comedies and Histories before Mr. W. S. Walker's *Critical Examination*, etc. (1860).

tion of the same author; for one differs from the other as much as if they were the work of two editors of different taste and different critical views. Mr. Dyce was one of the most cultivated of that modern school of critics which has made the study and the restoration of Shakespeare's text a special study. He had an acquaintance both wide and minute with all the literature of Shakespeare's time, and he had, besides, high training and very considerable acquirements in general literature and in art. Having a competent fortune, he was able to pursue his studies and his grateful labors at pleasure, and to mature his opinions and his plans before he began the task of preparing his work for the press. His editions of Peele, Greene, and Marlowe exhibited the qualities of mind which have here just been most respectfully awarded to him; and it seemed as if, with this preparation and practice, he might have been reasonably expected to produce the ideal edition of Shakespeare. But he did not. He issued two within seven years (the first in 1857); and unlike as they were, they both fell about equally short of that degree of merit which is necessary to distinguished excellence and permanent reputation. They showed learning and faithfulness, and one very valuable quality, intellectual candor. The mental traits of which they exhibited the lack were clear perception, imagination, and the power of sympathy. Mr. Dyce seemed never able to step from the outside of the poet's work inward, and to think with him. Critical sagacity has recently been attributed to him; but sagacity was just the quality he lacked. As a critic and editor he was entirely deficient in formative power. His fastidiousness led him to be generally timid, but he was sometimes bold, or rather rash.

An example of what he would and could do when he made a rush past the bounds of his usual self-limitation, is shown in a reading which is praised in an article in the "Edinburgh Review"[1] which attracted much attention at the time of its publication, and is still referred to in Shake-

[1] July, 1869.

spearean criticism. At the end of Hamlet's censure (Act I. Sc. 4) of the Danish custom of carousal is this passage: —

> The dram of eale
> Doth all the noble substance of a dout
> To his own scandal.

There is no sense in this, and yet there is the suggestion of a very fine sense, and one which points and barbs the well-aimed sentence that it tips. Few thoughtful and apprehensive readers of Shakespeare can fail to see, though dimly, the idea he meant to present to them; but, nevertheless, the efforts of a hundred and fifty years of textual criticism have not been able to restore that passage, which is left undisturbed in my own edition, and, of course, in the Cambridge. Mr. Dyce reads: —

> The dram of *evil*
> Doth all the noble substance *oft debase*,
> To his own scandal.

This affords a good sense, and one entirely in accordance with that of the whole speech; indeed, this very emendation must have occurred to all editors, and to many readers outside the critical circle. There is but one objection to it: to edit Shakespeare's text thus is to rewrite it in all obscure passages. Decide what you would like to have, and put it boldly into the text. This is the very reverse of what is done by the Cambridge editors; and Mr. Dyce's text is therefore readable from the beginning of "The Tempest" to the end of "Cymbeline." How near it is, in disputed passages, to what Shakespeare wrote, is another question. In this respect, however, it will compare pretty well with that of other modern editors; but notwithstanding the editor's many qualifications for his task, it is very far from having any distinctive merit. The reason of this I happen to know.

Mr. Dyce is no longer living, and his death is mourned by all who knew him; for he was one of the most estimable of men, as well as one who had done good service in the field of letters. He was a man for whom, although I never saw him, I had a very high respect, and whom I had reason

to regard with a somewhat warmer feeling than that of a mere literary acquaintance. This, and my deference to his age (he happened to be born in the same year with my father) and his position, prevented me from saying during his life what there is no reason that I should not say now, — that in my opinion he was one of the most unsuccessful of Shakespeare's editors. With all my deferential respect for him, I was prepared for this result before the appearance of the first of his three editions. The records of his literary life are now, within certain limits, the property of the world; and I may, therefore, with propriety, mention a fact to which, during his life, I did not give publicity. When his first edition — that of 1857 — was passing through the press, he wrote to me that there would be much delay in its appearance, because after the most of it was ready for the printer, and half was actually in type, he changed his views upon so many and such important points that the consequent alterations obliged him not only to rewrite much of his copy, but to cancel a large part of what had already been printed, amounting to half the work. This letter, while it raised my respect for the writer's faithfulness to his intellectual convictions, much lowered my estimate of Mr. Dyce as a critic and, consequently, as an editor. A man who, being at leisure to pursue his studies, had lived a purely literary life, who had the experience given by the editing of four other Elizabethan dramatists, who was at the ripe age of sixty years, and who, after preparing himself thoroughly for an edition of Shakespeare, could change his views upon so many and such important points when he was nearly through his labors that he was obliged to destroy no small part of what he had already sent to press, must be without any principles of criticism, and not only so, but without any opinions really worthy of the name. I no longer expected from him — what I had expected and hoped for and had almost presumed to promise on his behalf — an edition of the highest quality;[1] and when his edition did appear I was

[1] See *Shakespeare's Scholar*, p. 30, and *passim*.

not disappointed. It was full of valuable matter, and of instructive criticism; it was carefully and minutely edited; but it was nothing more. It was dry, vague, unsatisfactory, without unity of purpose, without character. I was, therefore, not surprised, although again I received the shock of an unfavorable impression, when he wrote to me, in 1862, that he was preparing a second edition of his Shakespeare, and that he was "glad to have the opportunity of altering it from beginning to end, in fact of making it very, very different, both in text and notes, from the former edition."

Here was (in fact) a third edition of Shakespeare within seven years, from a man of Mr. Dyce's acquirements and experience, each edition differing greatly from the other, both in text and notes. Could instability and lack of intellectual character and purpose be more clearly shown? The edition, when it appeared, fully justified the editor's prediction of its variation from its predecessor. Except for its indications of the same feeble, vacillating mind, it might have been the work of another man than the editor of the first edition. It was in some respects better, in others worse than that one. And I do not doubt that if Mr. Dyce had lived a few years longer he would have given us yet a third, or rather a fourth edition, differing greatly from either of its predecessors, and being, like the last, in some respects better, and in others worse, than its predecessor.[1]

To his second edition Mr. Dyce appended a glossary so copious that it fills a large octavo volume: a glossary generally correct, which at this stage of Shakespearean, linguistic, and antiquarian study, it could hardly fail to be, even if compiled by a less accomplished scholar than he. It is largely composed of definitions, or longer glosses, quoted from the pages of other Shakespearean critics and editors; but while it adds little to our previously acquired knowledge of Shakespeare's words and phrases, and even in a much

[1] This opinion, published in 1869, I found on my visit to England in 1876 (my first) supported in private conversation by that of the best Shakespearean scholars in the country.

less degree aids in their apprehension, it may be trusted, with comparatively rare exceptions, by the general reader. It has, however, in a notable degree, the great fault of excessive superfluity; which, indeed, is more than a fault — a vice; begetting in the reader indolence of mind, distrust of himself, distrust of his knowledge of his mother tongue, misapprehension of the condition and character of that tongue now and in the days of Shakespeare. The Dyce glossary includes (on a rough calculation) some six thousand items. It attains this dimension, in the first place, by including not only all obsolete, but all unusual words, common words used in uncommon senses, and with shades of meaning, however clear and obvious which are at all peculiar to Shakespeare; not only words, but phrases; not only words and phrases, but proverbial sayings, however common in literature and however well-known at this day; with explanations of customs more or less obsolete, and allusions more or less obscure. Besides all this, much of which it need hardly be said errs on the side of excess, it is superfluous in giving definitions of words and explanations of phrases which are in common use by all writers of English at the present day, and which are now daily on the lips of all English-speaking people, and by repetitions which are merely the use of the same word as verb or as substantive in the singular and in the plural.

We find, for example, these words and glosses; *abate* = to lower, to depress: *abide* = to sojourn, to tarry awhile: *absolute* = determined: *blench* = to start off, and then *blenches* = starts or aberrations, etc.: *dumps* = low-spirited: *crab* = wild-apple: *close* = secret: *bold* = confident: *fearful* = timid: *farrow* = a litter of pigs: *merit* = reward: *unprized* = not valued: *trenchant* = cutting, sharp: *blent* = blended: *hangman* = an executioner: *happiness* = good fortune: *don* = to put on: *doff* = to put off: *tell* = to count: *kindle* = to incite: *impawn* = to pawn or pledge: and hundreds of others which are in equally common every-day use by all writers and speakers of English. Under the letter "F" I find five

separate items, filling one third of an octavo page, made of the word *face*, used in senses known to every one, as "to patch," "to face down," "to carry a false appearance," etc.; two in like manner of *fee*; of *foot*, five, *for* has seven glosses, all equally needless; *force*, five; *free* does not escape three, one of them being "liberal"! and *front* we are actually told means "to oppose"! Indeed, under this chance-chosen letter, "F," I find three hundred and thirty items, more or less, of which at least one hundred and seventy-five are of the superfluous sort just exampled. With all this, to be sure, there is much which is valuable, interesting and instructive. Thus made, however, no wonder that the glossary printed in large type fills a large octavo volume. But why not print Johnson's or Webster's dictionary as a Shakespeare glossary, and have done with it?

I hoped that I had finished forever with various readings and conjectural emendations; but perhaps I can make it worth while for my readers and myself to consider briefly some of the points presented by the Edinburgh reviewer, and also some others which he did not touch upon.

After pointing out correctly, although with some superfluity of illustration, that in these lines spoken by Polonius, in "Hamlet," —

> And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
> With windlaces, and with assays of bias,
> By indirections find directions out, —
>
> Act II. Sc. 1.

windlaces does not mean windlasses, but a winding and circuitous course, and also that when Laertes, commenting upon Ophelia's distribution of her flowers, calls her speech a "document in madness," *document* has its etymological meaning, "teaching," — the reviewer turns his attention to Ophelia's "virgin crants." As to the latter word there is not the least room for doubt. It is the German *kranz*, a garland, used as a plural. But the reviewer makes much of showing that the burial of a maiden in the north of Europe is still appropriately marked, as in the case of Ophelia, by the presence of her "virgin crants and maiden strewments."

The fact is of some little interest in the history of manners and customs; but it has nothing to do with the elucidation or illustration of Shakespeare's text. If that were to be edited after this fashion, there would be no end to the labors of editors, and hardly a limit to the number of volumes required for a thoroughly annotated edition.

The reviewer then turns to the following passage in "Macbeth:" —

> And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late;
> Whom you may say, if 't please you, Fleance kill'd;
> For Fleance fled. Men must not walk too late.
> Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous
> It was for Malcolm and for Donaldbain
> To kill their gracious father?
>
> Act III. Sc. 6.

As to this, he quotes the criticism and the reading in "Shakespeare's Scholar," but seems to be ignorant that the view there taken was abandoned in my edition of 1857–62. He shows, what no one with a respectable knowledge of the language was ignorant of, that *want* was and is used in the north of England and in the lowlands of Scotland in the sense of "do without;" thus, a farmer asked to lend his horse will reply that he himself "cannot want the horse to-day." A mare's-nest of the largest sort. For "do without" is exactly the sense that here must be done without. The speaker surely means to ask, Who *can be without* the thought how monstrous it was for Malcolm and for Donaldbain to kill their gracious father?

The critic then shows elaborately that *sight* was used in Shakespeare's day in the sense of "acquaintance," "skill;" and that *cheapen* meant "to examine a thing offered for sale, with a view of buying it," saying, in the first instance, and implying in the last, that, of these senses, "neither critics nor lexicographers seem to be aware" — a more erroneous charge than which could scarcely be made. No man fit to edit Shakespeare could be ignorant of the use of those words in those senses. He takes three pages to show that *bezonian* ("Under which king, bezonian — speak or die!")

is obviously used by Pistol simply as a thrasonical phrase of martial contempt for the bucolic mind, the word having been used in Shakespeare's time to mean a rustic, clownish person. This also was well known. In my edition *bezonian* is compared to *pleeb*, the cadet cant of West Point for a rustic recruit; and in Cotgrave's Dictionary, a well-known authority to all Shakespearean scholars, *triquerelles* is defined as "slender and small chitterlings or links, also a rascal companie or a roguish crue of base and rude *bezonians*, ignorant clowns, scoundrels, thag-rags."

The obscure compound, *tender-hefted*, in Lear's speech,—

> Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
> Thee o'er to harshness,
>
> Act II. Sc. 4.

is explained by the reviewer as meaning "tender-bodied, delicately-organized, or, more literally, finely-fleshed," because *heft* means "handle," and "tender-hefted" must be "finely sheathed." A most manifest mare's-nest, and one at which every editor of Shakespeare must have looked, and passed by on the other side. Lear's thought has no reference to Regan's body, but to her soul. What had her body or her beauty to do with giving her over to harshness? There is possibly a misprint of *tender-hearted*, although we all shun such a simple relief of our difficulty, and linger in the sweet obscurity of *tender-hefted*.

Of a like superfluousness are the pages which this writer gives up to showing the meanings of *balk*, *lurch*, *hilding*, and *zany*, all of which are well known to every competent English scholar. For instance, he is at much pains to show, by argument and illustration, that *zany* means "not so much a buffoon and mimic as the obsequious follower of a buffoon and the attenuated mime of a mimic," and that "this feature of the early stage has descended to our own times, and may still continually be found in all its vigor in the performances of the circus." Had he turned to my edition, published twelve years before, he would have found the following note on "Twelfth Night," Act I. Sc. 5: —

"No better than fools' *zanies*." Those who have happened to see an old New England Primer with the cut of a zany for the Z, need not be told that Donce was wrong in saying that the zany was the fool's bauble. A zany was a fool's fool, or a clown that followed a tumbler and vaulter. His representative is to be found in the modern circus.

And in Duffeet's poems (A. D. 1676) are the following lines: —

> These shallow designs and the plots that you cast
> Can never prevail on a woman that 's chaste.
> If such humorous folly can raise love in any,
> Scaramouch will be sooner preferred than his zany.
>
> Page 60.

With this more than sufficient notice of an article which is the fruit of learning and critical ability, but which received much more attention than was due to the novelty of the opinions or the illustrations of Shakespeare that it presented, I pass to the consideration of a few passages in the text upon which there possibly remains some little to be said.

In "The Comedy of Errors," Act IV. Sc. 4, Dromio of Ephesus says to his master, who has reproached him with being sensible to nothing but blows, like an ass, "I am an ass indeed: you may prove it by my long ears." The point of Dromio's reply depends upon a pronunciation which yet survives among people of his class in England, who pronounce *ears*, *years*. The context shows this plainly; for Dromio goes on to say, "I have served him from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and have received nothing but blows." The Cambridge editors would print '*ear*, making an elision of *y*. But this is not only quite unnecessary, but would also take the life of the little joke of the speech. To preserve that, it is only necessary to pronounce *ears* as the Cambridge editors must hear it pronounced by the college scouts every day.

Moreover, like most well-known wits, Shakespeare is credited with much wit and some wisdom that is not his. An instance of this is Dogberry's famous apophthegm, "Comparisons are odorous." The humor of the mere blunder may be Shakespeare's; but the saying is to be found

in contemporary authors, and notably in the following passage from the first chapter of the second part of "Don Quixote:" —

¿ Y es posible que vuesa merced no sabe que las comparaciones que se hacen de ingenio á ingenio, de valor á valor, de hermosura á hermosura, y de linage á linage, son siempre odiosas y mal recebidas ?

that is, Is it possible that your honor does not know that comparisons made between genius and genius, courage and courage, beauty and beauty, birth and birth, are always "odious" and ill received? This part of "Don Quixote" was not published until fifteen years after the publication of "Much Ado about Nothing;" but Cervantes, doubtless, was not indebted to Shakespeare even for the word "odious." The adage, we may be sure, was common to all Europe.

In "Love's Labour's Lost" the name of Armado's page has been always printed *Moth*, even in my own edition, in which, however, it was asserted and maintained that the proper spelling and pronunciation of the name is *Mote;* the comparison intended being not to the insect but to the mote of the sunbeam. This was shown on the one hand by the following passage from the same play, in which Shakespeare spelled *mote, moth:* —

You found his *moth*, the King your *moth* did see,

and this from King John (Act IV. Sc. 1): —

Hubert. None but to lose your eyes.
Arthur. O heaven, that there were but a *moth* in yours !

This spelling is consequent upon the pronunciation of *th* as *t* in Shakespeare's time, which was asserted in my edition, to be denied stoutly in several quarters, by Mr. Marsh among others; but he, having become convinced of the soundness of the opinion in question, with his usual candor acknowledged his error. In support of the change which I propose in the passage which is the occasion of this note, I cite the following passage from a MS. of the fifteenth century: —

Cast the beame out of thine own eye, then thou maiest see a *mothe* in another man's. Reliquiæ Antiquæ, I. 207.

In the scene in which Mote (or Moth) first appears, he himself makes a pun which rests upon the very pronunciation of *th* to which he owes his ambiguous name. Armado is seeking justification for his passion for Jacquenetta by asking for examples of great men who have been in love. Mote suggests Samson, and adds that the woman that he loved was of "sea-water-green" complexion. Armado then says that Samson must have "surely affected her for her wit." To which the page replies, "It was so, sir; for she had a green wit." What does this reply mean? Nothing to us; unless we remember, what every one of Shakespeare's audience knew, that in their time *withe* was pronounced *wit*. Delilah's "green wit" was not only the wit that Armado had in mind, but the "green withes" with which she bound Samson when she sought to betray him to the Philistines.[1]

The same play has (Act IV. Sc. 3), according to the folio, the following lines: —

> For where is any author in the world
> Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye?

Here Mr. Collier's annotated folio gave us "Teaches such *learning*," etc., which reading is taken into the text of my edition. The reading of the folio leaves the context without meaning, a defect which is remedied by the reading brought forward by Mr. Collier. The correction seems to me to be supported by the following passage in Florio's translation of Montaigne's "Essays" — a book there is good reason for believing that Shakespeare read, and a passage from which he paraphrased in "The Tempest." It is at least probable that he had this one in mind when writing "Love's Labour's Lost."

> The company of faire and society of honest women is likewise a sweet commerce to me. Nam nos quoque oculos eruditos habemus; for we also have learned eyes.

In the first scene of "The Merchant of Venice" is the following passage in a speech by Bassanio: —

> In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
> I shot his fellow of the self-same flight

[1] Judges xvi. 7, 8.

> The self-same way, with more advised watch,
> To find the other forth.

"To find the other forth" has been pronounced by an accomplished critic of Shakespeare's language "neither English nor sense." It is, to be sure, somewhat strange to us, but it is both English and sense, although the simple explanation of it has not been given. *Forth* is used thus in Frobisher's account of his voyage. A. D. 1578: —

> On the other side the company a shoare feared that the captayne, having lost his shyppe, came *to seek forth* the fleete for his reliefe in his poore pinesse. Hakluyt Society's Ed., p. 270.

And in "The Comedy of Errors." Act I. Sc. 2. we have, "Who failing there *to find* his fellow *forth*." Plainly, in all these examples, *forth* is equivalent to *out*; to seek forth is to seek out, as we now say; to find forth is to find out. The connection of the ideas expressed by both the words is clear. That which goes forth goes out. The phrase is interesting as an example of the strangeness and the obscurity that may be the consequence of the use of a common word in a sense which, although it is quite closely connected with its radical meaning, is a little removed from that to which it is generally limited.

The merry Gratiano in the "Merchant of Venice" illustrates a great change that has taken place in the manners and customs of our daily life during the last two hundred years, when, assuring his patron that he will assume the airs of a pattern of sobriety, he says to Bassanio, "Never trust me more if I do not"

> —— while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
> Thus with my hat, and sigh and say Amen.
> Act II. Sc. 2.

Nothing would seem ruder to us than for a party of gentlemen to sit down to table with their hats on. But such was the practice in the best society of Shakespeare's time — the hat being removed only by the more punctilious while grace was said, and then resumed. John Florio says, in his "Second Fruites" (1591), "Let us make a law that no

man put off his hat or cap at the table. . . . This is a kinde of courtesie and ceremonie rather to be avoided than otherwise at table." Hence we see that the removal of the hat at table was regarded as a mark of extreme fastidiousness, or perhaps of exceeding deference to some eminent person.

The following passage in "The Winter's Tale" has been made the subject of much not very fruitful comment. Hermione speaks, addressing Leontes: —

> I appeal
> To your own conscience, sir, before Polixenes
> Came to your court, how I was in your grace,
> How merited to be so: since he came
> With what encounter so uncurrent I
> Have strain'd, etc. etc.
>
> Act III. Sc. 2.

The difficulty is in the word *uncurrent*, for which a sense in accordance with the context has not been discovered. It was suggested in my first edition that the passage is corrupt in the word *uncurrent;* and I am inclined to the opinion that we should read "with what encounter so *occurrent*." There is a hint of such a use of *occurrent* in the following whimsical passage in "The Opticke Glass of Humors:" —

> Another ridiculous foole of Venice thought his shoulders and buttockes were made of glasse, wherefore he shunned all occurrents, and never durst sit down to meat. Page 139.

In the fourth act of the same play the clown, attempting to check the chattering of Mopsa, Dorcas, and the other shepherdesses, cries, according to the folio, "Clamour your tongues, and not a word more." *Clamour* is retained by the Cambridge editors, and by some others; but it cannot be correct. *Charm*, *chamber*, *chommer*, *clammer*, and *chawmer* have been brought forward as emendations, of which the first is far the best. But it substitutes one syllable for two, and leaves *our* unaccounted for. The word for which *clamour* is a slight misprint is probably *chambre*, which appears twice in Udall's "Apophthegms of Erasmus," where the context assures us of its meaning: —

For critics menaced and thretened him that oneless he *chaumbred* his tongue in season, etc. . . . repair or *chambre* the tauntinge of his tongue.[1] Book I.

In "Richard II." is a passage which has given occasion for much conjectural emendation. A gardener says of Bolingbroke: —

> O, what pity is it
> That he had not so trimm'd and dress'd his land
> As we this garden! We, at time of year,
> Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit trees,
> Lest being over proud with sap, etc.
>
> Act III. Sc. 4.

What is the meaning of "at time of year," in which reading all the old copies, folios and quartos, concur? Should we not read at time of *vere*, *i. e.*, ver — spring, the time when trees are proud with sap? That emendation would be supported by the following passage in Skelton's verses on "Time:" —

> The rotys take theyr sap in time of *vere*,
> In time of somer flowers fresh and grene,
> In time of harvest men their corne shere,
> In time of wynter the north wynde waxeth kene,
> So bytterly bytinge the flowres be not sene.

Here we have in time of vere, summer, harvest, winter. The inducement to take *vere* into the text is very great. But compare the following passage from Andrew Borde's "Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge:" —

In the forest of St. Leonardes, in Southsex, there dothe never sing nightingale, although the foreste rounde aboute *in time of year* is replenyshed with nightingales.

But *y* being an easy misprint of *r*, particularly in black-letter, may not the same error have been committed in Borde and in Shakespeare?

Falstaff exclaims (King Henry IV., Part I., Act IV. Sc. 3), "Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn, but I shall have my pocket pick'd," and the phrase "take mine ease in mine inn" has been regarded as an instance of Shakespeare's

[1] And yet when I came to edit the "Riverside" edition (1883), I shrank from this reading. The word is one which Shakespeare would not have been likely to use.

curious felicity of expression, like "discourse of reason," "comparisons are odious," and others; whereas, like them, it is a mere familiar phrase of his period, used by him without thought, and as matter of course. Archbishop Cranmer, in his "Confutation of Unwritten Verities," published A. D. 1582, has this passage: —

> What should he neede to toile herein himselfe? or why shoulde he not like a gentleman, take his ease in his inne? Page 74.

It has been clearly enough shown that sack — which some folk would have it was a mixture, like metheglin, for instance — was nothing more or less than sherry wine; but the following quaint passage from Howell's letters, written about 1645, is not only confirmatory on this point, but an interesting contribution to the history of toping among our forefathers: —

> For Sherries and Malagas well mingled pass for Canaries, in most taverns, more often than Canary itself. . . . When Sacks and Canaries were brought in first among us they were us'd to be drunk in Aquavitæ measures; and 't was held fit only for those to drink of them that carried their legs in their hands, their eyes upon their noses, and an almanack in their bones. But now they go down every one's throat, young and old, like milk. Book II. p. 54.

The mention of Adonis's gardens in "Henry VI.," Part I., Act I. Sc. 6, gave Bentley the opportunity of remarking that there is no authority for the existence of any such gardens, in Greek or Latin writers; the κῆποι Ἀδωνίδος being mere pots of earth planted with a little fennel and lettuce, which were borne by women on the feast of Adonis, in memory of the lettuce-bed where Venus laid her lover. But Spenser, writing before Shakespeare, says: —

> But well I wote by tryale that this same
> All other pleasant places doth excell,
> And called is by her lost lover's name,
> The Garden of Adonis, faire renown'd by fame.
> . . . . . .
> Daily they grow, and daily forth are sent
> Into the world.
> Faerie Queene, Book III., Canto 6, st. 29, 36.

And the scholar-poet, Milton, calls Eden (Paradise Lost,

IX. 440) "Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned, or of revived Adonis," etc.

But, after all, Shakespeare, or the author of the First Part of "King Henry VI.," whoever he was, whether from knowledge or by chance, was more correct, or rather less incorrect, than Spenser or Milton. He does not speak of the gardens of Adonis as a place, or as a spot: he only compares speedily redeemed promises to "Adonis's gardens, that one day bloomed and fruitful were the next." So Plato says in his "Phædrus": —

> Now do you think that a sensible husbandman would take the seed which he valued, and, wishing to produce a harvest, would seriously, after the summer had begun, scatter it in the gardens of Adonis for the pleasure of seeing it spring up and look green in a week?

In the Second Part of "King Henry VI.," Act I. Sc. 3, one of several petitioners awaiting the entrance of the Duke of Suffolk says: —

> My masters, let 's stand close: my Lord Protector will come this way by and by, and then we may deliver our supplications in the quill.

What is meant by "in the quill?" Mr. Singer and Mr. Dyce suggested that we should read "in the quoil," *coil, confusion*. At first I regarded "in the quill" as equivalent to "in manuscript," as "in type" would be to "in print." The Collier folio gave "in sequel," which Mr. Collier adopted. But a correspondent of the London "Athenæum" (February 27, 1864) cited "Ainsworth's Dictionary," ed. 1773, as authority for accepting "in the quill" as a phrase equivalent to *ex compacto agere*, to do together. In support of this interpretation of the passage I offer the following lines of a Roxburghe Ballad, my particular reference to which has been mislaid.

> Thus those females were all *in a quill*
> And following on in their pastime still.

One of the strangest and, at first sight, most puzzling uses of a very common word by Shakespeare occurs in the last line of the following passage of "King Henry VIII.," Act I. Sc. 1, in which Buckingham is raving at Wolsey for the manner in which he made up the list of those who were to

accompany Henry to the Field of the Cloth of Gold. The passage, like many in this play, bears the marks of haste and carelessness.

> He makes up the file
> Of all the gentry; for the most part such
> To whom as great a charge as little honour
> He meant to lay upon: and his own letter,
> The honourable board of council out,
> Must fetch him in he papers.

It has been proposed to read "*the* papers," "he *paupers*," and "he *prefers*." But *papers* has been accepted by some editors as a verb, the consequent meaning of the line being —must fetch him in whom he, Wolsey, puts upon paper. It has been objected that such a use of *paper* is unprecedented and without support of any example. This is of small consequence; Shakespeare did not wait upon precedent: but the following line from "Albion's England" supplies the needless authority, and supports the received text and this interpretation of it: —

> Set is the soveraigne sunne, did shine when *papered* last our penne.
> Book XIV., chap. 80, ed. 1606.

Shakespeare's wisest play, and that also in which he shows most acquaintance with classical literature, is "Troilus and Cressida." In the best scene of this play, the third of the third act, is the following speech: —

> This is not strange, Ulysses;
> The beauty that is borne here in the face
> The bearer knows not, but commends itself
> To others' eyes: nor doth the eye itself,
> That most pure spirit of sense, behold itself,
> Not going from itself: but eye to eye oppos'd
> Salutes each other with each other's form.
> For speculation turns not to itself,
> Till it hath travell'd and is mirrored there
> Where it may see itself. This is not strange at all.

The old copies in the last line but one have "is married there." The reading "is *mirrored* there" was found on the margins of Mr. Collier's second folio and of Mr. Singer's, and was adopted in my first edition. This was done upon the merits of the emendation alone. It seems to be re-

quired. But it is confirmed, made imperative it would seem, by the following passage in Plato's "First Alcibiades," which, however, I bring forward here not chiefly for that purpose, but to direct attention to a similarity of thought and expression between it and Achilles's speech, which seems quite inexplicable, except on the supposition that Shakespeare was acquainted with what Plato wrote.

We may take the analogy of the eye. The eye sees not itself, but from some other thing; for instance, a mirror. But the eye can see itself also by reflection in another eye; not by looking at any other part of a man, but at the eye only.

Whewell, in his note on this passage, commends its beauty, but makes no allusion whatever to the passage in "Troilus and Cressida," in which the self-same thought is expressed. It occurs also in "Julius Cæsar," Act I. Sc. 2: —

No, Cassius; for the eye sees not itself
But by reflection — by some other thing.

Hamlet's first soliloquy opens thus: —

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!

And in "Cymbeline," Act III. Sc. 4, Imogen says: —

Against self-slaughter
There is a prohibition so divine
That cravens my weak hand.

Here are two very particular assertions of the existence of a specific prohibition of suicide by Divine law. Shakespeare may have known the Bible, as he knew all other things in his day knowable, so much better than I do, that I may not without presumption question what he says with regard to it. But I have not been able to discover any such specific prohibition. Perhaps some of my readers have been, or may be, more successful.

In the play last mentioned, Guiderius and Arviragus being about to bury the sleeping Imogen, whom they take for dead, Arviragus says (Act IV. Sc. 2), —

Nay, Cadwal, we must lay his head to th' East,
My father hath a reason for 't.

This reason has not been shown, and in my first edition the lack of explanation was merely pointed out without any attempt to supply it. But the reason was that the British people, whom our Anglo-Saxon and pagan forefathers supplanted, were Christians; and antiquarians now determine the nationality of ancient sepulchral remains in England by the direction of the graves in which they are found. If the graves are oriented, the remains are those of ancient Britons; if not, of Anglo-Saxons or Danes. But how did this man, Shakespeare, know all these things?

I have heretofore mentioned the Shakespeare Lexicon, by the erudite Dr. Alexander Schmidt, of Koenigsberg. How ever learned Dr. Schmidt may be (and I believe that he is a scholar of most respectable attainments), however able (and I would willingly assume that his ability is equal to his scholarship), however painstaking (and his Lexicon shows him to be most commendable in this respect), I cannot but regard that work as of little value to the student of Shakespeare; and not only so, but as a conspicuous example of a kind of effort the fruits of which the world might well be spared. What it is and what is its value may be very easily seen.

Shakespeare used, it is said, about fifteen thousand words.[1] All these words (except the articles, prepositions, and conjunctions) may be found in Mrs. Cowden Clarke's Concordance of the Plays, and in the Concordance of the Poems, by the late Mrs. Horace Howard Furness, — the latter work having the great value of comprising every one of the words used, articles and what not. In both these works the words appear with brief context, and arranged alphabetically under play, act, and scene, or poem. Any word used by Shakespeare may thus be seen at once by the student, and its sense in one passage compared with its sense in all others.

Now of Shakespeare's fifteen thousand words there are not more than two or three hundred of which the reader of

[1] This estimate is not mine. It seems to me excessive.

general information and intelligence needs explanation because of their obsoleteness, and little more than one hundred because of their use in a sense peculiar to Shakespeare. If any one of my readers is surprised at this assertion, let him consider the question briefly, and I think that he will see that, were it otherwise, Shakespeare could not be read in our day with constantly increasing delight by millions, young and old, educated, half educated, nay, truly uneducated. That the glossaries appended to Shakespeare's works contain a larger number of words than this — some twelve or fifteen hundred, usually — is not at all to the purpose. Again, a moment's reflection will make it clear to any reasonable person that if one tenth of Shakespeare's words were obsolete or esoteric his plays would be unreadable, except by scholars.

The multiplicity of the lists in the glossaries is easily explained. We have seen how it is in the case of Mr. Dyce's. Opening that of the "Globe" edition casually, I find in the first of its brief columns that meets my eye the following words given and explained: *gaudy*, brilliantly festive, "Let 's have another gaudy night;" *gaze*, object looked at with curious wonder, "live to be the show and gaze o' th' time;" *gear*, matter of business; *general*, common; *generations*, children; *gentility*, good manners; *german*, akin (as in cousin-german); *gifts*, talents; *gilt*, gold, money, bribes, "have for the gilt of France confirm'd conspiracy:" *glose*, to comment; *glut*, to swallow; *government*, self-restraint; *gracious*, full of grace; *grained*, engrained; *grange*, a farmhouse; *gratillity*, a Fool's ludicrous blunder for *gratuity*; *gratulate*, to congratulate; *grave*, to bury, put in a grave; *green*, immature, fresh; *greenly*, foolishly; *grossly*, palpably; and *gentle* is given three times; *gird* twice, and *gleek* twice, with essentially the same meaning. These words fill half the column in which they appear.

Now I confess at once that I have never written nor edited for those who do not see that such glosses are more than superfluous, — absurd. A reader who needs explanation of

such words as those cited above has no business with a Shakespeare, — no business with any book other than a primer and a popular dictionary. Who needs the explanation of such words as those could not read a newspaper of higher class than a Police Gazette; certainly not a Penny Dreadful. Nor do such people read Shakespeare, or even any writer of the day who rises in thought or phrase above the level of the poet's corner or the humorous column. One reason of this glossarial superfluity would seem to be that tendency which I have elsewhere remarked upon, to obtrude explanation of word and phrase when it is the thought that eludes apprehension, and the founding of glossaries upon such notes of explanation; another, that disposition, also heretofore mentioned, to magnify the Shakespearean office, to set it off as an *ism*, to make the reading of Shakespeare a cult, and the editing him a mystery.

Our brief chance examination of the "Globe" glossary showed us that not half the words included in it needed glosses for any person who could read an English newspaper of average grade. But even this conclusion overstates the truth. Not six hundred of Shakespeare's fifteen thousand words need glosses, — not more, or much more, than two or three hundred, as I have said before. Now what the Shakespeare Lexicon does is to give in two immense volumes, — a bulk four times as great as that of the "Globe" Shakespeare, — all Shakespeare's words arranged alphabetically, with their various definitions in the order of the plays. I open casually the volume on which my hand first falls, and find the page before me entirely filled with citations and definitions of the following words: *slave*, *slavelike*, *slaver*, *slavery*, *slavish*, *slay*, *slayer*, *sleave-silk*, *sledded*, *sleek*, *sleek-headed*, *sleekly*, *sleep*, not one of which, it will be seen, is obsolete or obsolescent, not one of which could not be found in any popular manual-dictionary, not one of which would trouble a common-school boy of average intelligence.

As to the meaning of Shakespeare's words which every ordinarily intelligent reader understands, and without such

an understanding of which Shakespeare's writings, and not only they but the general literature of the day, would be incomprehensible, — as to these, no one needs the ministrations of any special Shakespeare lexicographer, nor those of any lexicographer. Where help is needed is in words and phrases of the opposite class. If Dr. Schmidt's scholarship and his mastery of the English language had enabled him to throw new light upon these, or upon any considerable proportion of them, a brief glossological excursus to that effect by him would have been welcome; and I cannot but believe that it would have been performed by him in a thorough and scholarly manner. But here is exactly where he fails. Where definition and comparison of words and phrases is needless, more than superfluous, he is in most cases triumphantly clear and correct; it is chiefly in the case of obsoleteness or obscurity that he fails to benefit the world by what has been called his "combination of accuracy and acuteness."

That, for example, *slave* means "a person who is absolutely subject to the will of another;" *slay*, "to kill, to put to death;" *sleek-headed*, "having the hair well combed;" *sleep*, "rest taken by a suspension of the voluntary exercise of the bodily and mental powers," and so forth, we hardly need the aid of scholarship like Dr. Schmidt's to know. Indeed, every reader of English blood or breeding is likely to know it better than Dr. Schmidt does. But when he comes to the words and phrases about which English folk may doubt, although with some inkling of their meaning, he is generally — no, I cannot say generally, for I have yet (that is, as I write these lines) cut but few leaves of his Lexicon, but generally on such an examination — in a sad muddle of confusion and ignorance. Would it not be somewhat unreasonable to expect otherwise?

On the page now accidentally before me, in the passage in the first act of "Hamlet," —

> Such was the very armour he had on
> When he th' ambitious Norway combated:

> So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle
> He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice,

because "Polacks" happens to be spelled phonetically in the folio *Pollax* (as it is in the passage of the Address to the Reader in Lodge's "Euphues' Golden Legacie," "I 'll down into the hold and fetch out a rustie pollax," etc.), he will have it that we should read *pole-axe:* that *sledded* means having a sledge or heavy hammer on it; and that "smote the sledded pole-axe on the ice" means that the elder Hamlet in his anger smote the ice with his pole-axe. There could not be better evidence of Dr. Schmidt's superfluity as a Shakespearean lexicographer than this amazing, and I must be pardoned for saying ridiculous, explanation. The absurdity of it is *felt* by every English-minded reader more easily than it is explained. It is so laughably inconsistent with the tone of this scene, awful with the wraith of the majesty of buried Denmark, to picture the royal Dane smiting the ice with his pole-axe, like a testy old heavy father in a comedy! But on turning to Furness's variorum edition of this play, I discover, from the first sentence of his array of notes on this passage, that "German commentators have found more difficulty in this phrase than English." I should think so. It is not surprising. Dr. Furness, after gathering (as according to his vast plan he must needs gather) a great deal of such lumber together in a compressed or abbreviated form, at last says, in regard to the exegesis of one of these learned German scholars, and one who does not insist upon *pole-axe*, "This comment paralyzes my power to paraphrase," and gives it in full thus: —

> I always regarded "sleaded," or, as the modern editors read, "sledded," as nonsense. What a ridiculous position it must have been to see a king in full armour smiting down a sledded man; that is, a man sitting in a sledge! It would rather not have been a king-like action. And it was of course not a remarkable, not a memorable fact that in the cold Scandinavian country in winter time people were found sitting in a sledge: nobody would have wondered at it, — perhaps more at the contrary. When the king frowned in an angry parle, he must have been provoked to it by an

irritating behavior of the adversary, and Horatio, remembering the fact, will also bear in mind the cause of it; and so I suppose he used an epithet which points out the provoking manner of the Polack, and, following as much as possible the form "sleaded," I should like to propose the word *sturdy*, or, as it would have been written in Shakespeare's time, *sturdie*.

And the man who wrote that undertakes to explain Shakespeare, and even to write verbal criticism on his language; nay, verily, to propose emendations of his text! Do not suppose that he is ignorant, that he is even a half-scholar, or that he is dull. On the contrary, he, like Dr. Schmidt, is a scholar and a man of ability. It is simply that he does not understand the English idiom and the English way of thinking. If our good German friends would but confine themselves to admiring Shakespeare, although in a somewhat simpler and less profound manner than is their wont, and would confine their learned and elaborate, and generally very useful endeavors in verbal and philosophical exegesis to the second part of "Faust" and the like it would, I venture to think, tend greatly to edification.[1]

[1] Some weeks after the plea above was first published (*The Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1884), I met with the following very pertinent remarks in an article in the *Evening Post* on Kölbing's *Englische Studien*: —

"Unfortunately, if the work of some of the contributors should fall into the hands of a classical scholar, he would be in great danger of renouncing his own investigations, appalled by the results of induction and analogy as applied to modern tongues, while the non-philological mind would simply set down as arrant nonsense the laborious process of getting at the wrong sense of an English phrase, which could be settled beyond controversy by a postal card addressed to any one born to the English tongue. . . .

As a rule, the German prefers to hammer out the sense of any unknown sentence in his own way, by laborious mechanical processes, or to absorb the meaning of a phrase by plunging his nature into the psychological environment of the English tongue. One must not be deceived by the modesty with which the views are sometimes put forth. Attack the result, and you will see how ignorant you are of your native language.

In this last number of Kölbing's *Studien* one of the most interesting articles — they are all interesting — is a series of observations on the language of Carlyle. . . . The compounds, as one of the most noticeable features of Carlyle's style, are naturally attacked first. They are alphabetically arranged, without a hint of difference. Some of the combinations have, to be sure, found their way into the dictionary, but as "there

My first examination of this Lexicon was very slight; but I find among many words checked on its margins at that examination these: —

Apply defined as "to make use of." Now a thing applied, whether it is craft, or a poultice, or medicine, is in-

is a possibility that they found their way out of Carlyle's writings," the conscientious collector makes no distinction, and we find "free-will," "harvest-home," "heavy-wet" ("probably a vulgarism," he adds), "high-flying," "sun-down," "heavy-laden," "hide-bound," "sky-high," in company with "world-whirlpool," "upholsterer-mummery," and "phantasm-aristocracy." "Bob-major" and "bob-minor" are set down as slang; "soft-sawder" ("Lamartine, with nothing in him but melodious wind and soft-sawder") is a hopeless puzzle.

But if the article on Carlyle errs chiefly from lack of perspective, and really serves to bring to our consciousness the mechanical effects of Carlyle's style, the article on *Tom Brown's School-days* furnishes abundant illustration of the enormous difficulty of mastering the familiar life of a language from the outside; and, by the way, a curious feeling comes over one on reading these grave discussions as to the proper rendering of all Tom Brown's schoolboy slang — a feeling of shame at finding the English language caught, as it were, in its shirtsleeves by an unlicensed foreigner — a feeling that slang ought to be kept wholly for home consumption, and not submitted to chemical analysis on foreign soil. It appears that some five years since one Doctor Pfeffer published an abridged edition of *Tom Brown's School-days* with explanatory notes for the benefit of German students of English, and now, at a somewhat later day, Otto Kares, in an unusually polite manner, takes Doctor Pfeffer to task for some of his explanations, and well he may. Doctor Pfeffer fancies that "at a day's notice" means "in the course of a day;" that "slap up" (the classical passage, "they sent him slap up to the ceiling") means "first-rate;" that "the winter's wear" of a road means "snow and ice;" that "sets in the school" has some vague reference to things in a school. The critic himself, however, often opens himself wide to criticism, and his supplementary remark to Doctor Pfeffer's note on "to knock me out of time" is delicious. This phrase Doctor Pfeffer explains as a jocose expression for "killing," and Doctor Pfeffer's critic cites as a parallel the "very common phrase" "to knock one into next week." Evidently, to both of those great scholars, "to knock out of time" is "to knock one into eternity." One of them thinks that "to go the length of" has reference to a long and tedious action; the other stoutly maintains that it involves slow and circumstantial action, and he refers to the "well known passage" of the *Christmas Carol* — a passage not present to the mind of the reviewer — 'He went the whole length of the expression.'"

Wherefore, after this ludicrous exposition of "English as She is Spoke," again we English-blooded, English-tongued folk must utter our friendly counsel to these German scholars, and express the hope that they will confine themselves to the German language and literature, in which they are

deed used; but *apply* does not therefore mean "to make use of." To apply is to set one thing against or to another; as when a plaster is applied, or a student applies himself, or a man applies his memory. The Lexicon very misleadingly confuses two distinct although related thoughts.

Contrive, in "Taming of the Shrew," Act I. Sc. 2, "please ye we may contrive this afternoon and quaff carouses," is defined as either "to spend," or "to pass away," or "to lay schemes;" which will seem strange to any Englishwoman who is in the habit of saying, "How shall we contrive to pass the time?" Here *contrive* signifies, merely, "manage."

Buckle, in passages like "in single combat thou shalt buckle with me," is defined "to join in close fight;" and this sense is said to be "probably derived from the phrase to turn the buckle"! Here is a mistake of the same sort as that about *apply*. *Buckle* may well be applied, and sometimes is applied, to joining in fight, but it does not *mean* that, nor anything like it. We buckle to our work; a studious boy buckles to his lessons; and in an old song a hesitating girl says she "can't buckle to," meaning she can't bring herself to be married. *Buckle* means, merely, "bend," and is, and was so used, simply and baldly; as, for example: —

> And like a bow *buckled* and bent together
> By some more strong in mischiefs than myself.
> Ford & Dekker, The Witch of Edmonton, Act II. Sc. 1.

This meaning appears in the Latin *bucca* = a cheek, *buccula* = the curve of a helmet or the boss of a shield, the French *boucle* = a curl, and our *buckle*, an implement to hold a thong. We bend (buckle) to our work; a boy bends (buckles) to his task; a soldier buckles (that is, bends, gives

at home, to the classical tongues, in which we are all equally abroad, and to comparative philology, in which they are the world's masters, and chiefly of all writers let Shakespeare alone, whether in the way of verbal criticism, or textual exegesis, or philosophical and æsthetic comment. Upon that subject they will most profit, if not most distinguish themselves, by sitting as learners.

himself body and soul) to combat. And see this example of this common usage in a popular novel of the day: "Now will you just *buckle-to*, and give Sugden a hand to cut down the infernal rubbish [copy for a newspaper] he 's been pitchforking upstairs all night." (My Ducats and My Daughter, chap. 14.) The Lexicon, defining that which to an intelligent English reader needs no definition, misleads readers who are not English and not intelligent.

Set cock-a-hoop certainly does not mean "pick a quarrel;" so clearly does every English reader see this, although he may not know the origin of the phrase, that further words about it would be wasted. I venture to suggest, however, as to this phrase, of which no explanation has yet been accepted, that the last word may have originally been *whoop*, and that *cock-a-whoop*, a cock constantly crowing, was applied to a loud, boastful, forward fellow. This explanation at least fits all the uses of the phrase that I can remember.

And how it astonishes us English-tongued folk to be told by a distinguished scholar that *lapsed* means "surprised, taken in the act;" and that when Hamlet says to his father's ghost that he is "lapsed in time and passion" he means, "I am surprised by you in a time and passion fit for," etc.! *Lapsed* means "lost in, given up to, abandoned to;" and Hamlet says that *he* was feebly given up to procrastination and moody feeling. The notion that "lapsed" has any reference to the action or to the presence of the fancied ghost is surely not one of the least extraordinary pieces of Shakespearean exegesis that exists in that extraordinary literature.

And so when the Shakespeare Lexicon tells us that in Touchstone's "Well said; that was laid on with a trowel," we have "a proverbial phrase, probably meaning without ceremony," how we are tempted into exclamation and laughter, — we who, not being scholars, have always understood it as meaning, simply, "that was laid on thick, as a bricklayer lays on mortar"!

Nor has *pitched*, in "a pitched battle," anything to do with "the custom of planting sharp stakes in the ground against hostile horse." *Pitch* (of unknown etymology) is merely "to place firmly and suddenly." A man pitches upon a site for his house; a clergyman pitches upon a text for his sermon; a singer pitches upon a note; we pitch upon anything that we choose quickly and decidedly. So a woman may pitch upon a husband, as in the following passage of Motteux's translation of "Don Quixote:" —

"Therefore he took care to let her know of all those that would have taken her to wife, both what they were, and what they had; and he was at her to have her *pitch* upon one of them for a husband."

Vol. i. p. 121, ed. Lockhart, 1822.

So *pitch* was (and is) used to express the spreading or casting of nets (toils), as by Marlowe: —

Huntsmen, why *pitch* you not your toils apace?

Dido, Act III. Sc. 3.

Pitch thus used is idiomatic, as *strike* is in the phrases "they struck [took down] their tents," "they struck [hauled down] their flag." Tents were and are pitched; and to pitch a battle was to choose the ground for it and to array the troops. The old preterite was *pight*, which is used by Shakespeare: —

When I dissuaded him from his intent,
And found him *pight* to do it, with curst speech
I threaten'd to discover him.

Lear, Act II. Sc. 1.

Here *pight* means merely fixed, set, as it does in this line of Spenser's: —

But in the same a little grate was *pight*.

Faerie Queene, I. viii. 37.

And in Mandeville "a spere that is pight into the erthe" means merely a spear that is set into the earth. "Straight-pight Minerva," in "Cymbeline," Act V. Sc. 5, means, not Minerva fastened or stuck into the ground or elsewhere, but Minerva well set up and straight and bold in carriage.

Pitch and *pight* used in regard to tents or spears or stakes do not mean more or other than when used in regard to anything else, a site, a text, a note, a husband, or what not.

Nor does *sheep-biter* mean "a morose, surly, malicious fellow," or anything like that. If Dr. Schmidt had said it meant a thief, he would have had the support of good "authority" (whatever that may be). It was indeed applied to thieves, as in this line: —

> How like a *sheep-biting* rogue, taken i' th' manner!
> Fletcher, Rule a Wife, etc., Act V. Sc. 4.

and so it was to malicious persons, as in the following line: —

> His hate like a *sheep-biter* fleering aside.
> Tusser, Envious and Naughtie Neighbour, p. 112, ed. 1610.

But it was so applied merely because it was a general term of reproach. It means merely "mutton-eater." This I suggested in my first edition of "Twelfth Night" (1857); and afterwards I found the following reference to the phrase by Addison: —

> Mutton . . . was formerly observed to be the food rather of men of nice and delicate appetites than those of strong and robust constitutions. For which reason even to this day we use the word *Sheep-biter* as a term of reproach, as we do Beef-eater in a respectful, honorable sense.
> Tatler, No. 148

Addison's testimony (and he mentions that he had consulted antiquaries — in 1709 — on the subject of his paper) leaves no doubt as to the meaning of the compound, and as to its use as a general term of reproach. But I venture a dissent from his inference in regard to delicate appetites. Mutton two and three hundred years ago was looked upon as very inferior food to venison and to beef; and "mutton-eater" coarsened into "sheep-biter" corresponded to the modern "tripe-eater."

Even a glance here and there at my few casual checks upon the margins of this Lexicon leads me to remark upon the extraordinary misapprehension which gives "one who goes abroad" as the meaning of *putter-out*, in "each putter-

out of five for one ; " [1] which tells us (the word, unseen before, catches my eye just as I turn the leaves) that *point blank* means " with certain aim, so as not to miss," — *point blank* having nothing to do with aim, or hitting or missing, but meaning merely " in a direct line, on a level, without elevation or depression of the gun ; " and finally, at the misapprehension, amazing on the part of one who professes to interpret Shakespeare's language, in consequence of which — will it be believed ? — Bottom's " wren with little quill " is given as an example of the use of *quill* in the sense " the strong feather of the wing of a bird." Here *quill* means pipe, note : " little quill " = feeble note. This whole article on *quill* is wrong. A quill is not " the strong feather of the wing of a bird " — not so either absolutely or in Shakespeare's use of it. The lexicographers are loose upon this word. A quill is not a feather at all, except by the metonomy by which one part is put for another or a part for the whole. Every feather is composed of quill and plume or dowle. The quill is that cylindrical and hollow stem, which, at the body-end, tapers away in fine shell-covered pith, from which the plume or dowle grows. The quill is to the feather as the trunk and branches are to the tree. Porcupines have quills, but they have no feathers. Birds have feathers, and therefore of necessity quills. This was happily, although unconsciously, illustrated by Marlowe, in the following simile : —

> As if a goose should play the porcupine,
> And dart her plumes, seeking to pierce my breast.
> Edward II., Act I. Sc. 1.

[1] This phrase, and the practice to which it refers, are well illustrated and explained by the following *jeu d'esprit* : —

> Lycus, which lately is to Venice gone,
> Shall, if he do returne, gain three for one;
> But ten to one his knowledge and his wit
> Will not be better'd or increas'd a whit.
> *Davies' Epigrams*, 1599 (?), xlii.

This Elizabethan traveller, who went to " swim in a gondola," as Rosalind says, *put out* his money at *three for one*.

In flying birds the quills of the wing-feathers are strong, and the plume or dowle is close and compact; in some non-flying birds, as the ostrich, the quill is small and weak, and the plume large and loosely open. But all feathers, even those on the breast of the smallest bird, have a quill. It is by the quill that both nourishment and substantial form are given to the feather. *Quill*, from the resemblance of the most important part of the thing to a reed (whence indeed its name), is sometimes used by the poets for *pipe*. But even were Bottom's use of it in this sense unique, it would be manifest at the first blush to every intelligent English reader.

Thus far I wrote, having only dipped here and there into the checks upon my margins, nine years ago. Afterward, however, I thought that, having written so much, I ought to examine the Lexicon somewhat at least more in detail; and having done so, I present as briefly as possible the results of my partial examination.

If a book should be judged only with regard to its purpose, Dr. Schmidt's Shakespeare Lexicon is in one respect, so far as I have examined it, and in so far as I am competent to express an opinion upon the point, very thorough, and generally accurate. This point is the setting forth, in the terminology — what Benedick calls "the terminations" — of the grammarians, the various modes and connections in which Shakespeare uses words. Thus we are told that certain adjectives always "precede" or always "follow the substantive;" that certain words or phrases are used "only in conditional or subordinate clauses;" that one verb is used "with an infinitive" of another; that another is used "with an accusative;" another "with a double accusative in the same sense;" that "in speaking of future things" *before* is "followed by the subjunctive mood;" and that a preposition is "followed by the subjunctive in hypothetical and problematical cases;" that one word is "followed by an accusative and an infinitive without *to*," and that another is "joined in a periphrastical way to different substantives implying the

idea of an action to denote the respective action," and so forth. If it is desirable that this should be done, it could not be done more thoroughly, and, except by an equally accomplished English-speaking grammarian, not more accurately than it has been done in most cases, but not in all, by Dr. Schmidt. The dissent upon which I venture on this point is not as to the execution, but as to the purpose.

It is needless for me to say to my readers at this late day that I regard all such treatment of the English language, and particularly all such treatment of Shakespeare's language (for English-speaking readers certainly) as sheer vanity and vexation of spirit. It does no one any good. It teaches no one to understand Shakespeare, to understand English, or to write it. It is mere grammatical pedagogism and pedantry. It merely records in a sort of professional cant facts which to those who can apprehend them at all are obvious, untold, and unrecorded. It elucidates nothing, illustrates nothing, adds nothing whatever, *of any significance*, to the sum of our knowledge of Shakespeare, his plays or his language. It is the barrenest of all barren labors. Those who do not know untold what it tells them, and who yet wish to be told something that they do not understand; and those who, knowing it and seeing it, yet like to have the patent fact seized upon, labelled, and filed away in sight, will find their heart's desire in Dr. Schmidt's broad columns. But those who wish to understand Shakespeare will find only grammatical dust and ashes.

When we examine the Shakespeare Lexicon to discover its value as a guide to Shakespeare's meaning, and to an understanding of his use of language, we find, accompanying evidences of an acquaintance with English and even of Shakespeare's English which is very remarkable in a German, much that is misleading, and much that must astonish any English-speaking reader who has a moderate acquaintance with the literature of his mother tongue. I do not profess to have examined the Shakespeare Lexicon thoroughly. I have not the time for such a task, even if I had

the inclination, and my lack of inclination is shown by the years which I have allowed to pass since the judgment which I formed for myself alone on my first glance through its multitudinous pages. Moreover, it is with reluctance that I undertake to set forth with any detail the result of my second, but yet very incomplete examination of it, which I do only because I am driven to the task by the manner in which some brief dissenting allusions of mine to it have been received by critics whose acquaintance with it must, I am sure, be even less than mine. What I have done is merely this, — to look cursorily, very cursorily, over the pages of the first four letters in each of the two volumes, and to glance in like manner over the uncut sheets of the remainder of the work, seeing thus only two pages of eight in these sheets, and cutting a leaf now and then, but very rarely, for special reference. Let us consider briefly the results of this imperfect, rapid, and almost casual examination.

Under the heading "*A* or *An;* indefinite article, the two forms differing as at present," I find it remarked that "according to custom, the poet says once a day, but also once in a month." At sight of this one is tempted to exclaim with Mr. Charley Bates, in Dickens's "Oliver Twist," "Vell, vot of it?" So the poet says, like the spelling-books, "go up," "go on"; and so all English-speaking people for centuries have said both "once a day," and "once in a month." If Dr. Schmidt had remarked upon the construction and meaning of the phrase "once a day," he might perhaps have said something of interest and value to his readers; but what is the use of this telling everybody what everybody knows, that Shakespeare has used phrases that everybody else uses in the sense in which they are used by everybody?

So we are told that *a* or *an* is "used for *one*," and some twenty and more examples are given. But *a* or *an* is *always* used for *one*, being a mere phonetic variation of it; of which Dr. Schmidt cannot be ignorant. Whether we

say "at a blow," or "at one blow," is determined merely by the comparative haste or deliberation with which we speak. There is not the shadow of a shade of difference in meaning. Only one of the examples cited is worthy of record, and hardly that; for it is from the Nurse in "Romeo and Juliet," "rosemary and Romeo begin with a letter." So she and Mrs. Quickly might speak; but their English is no indication of usage of any kind. Other persons would say, with the same letter.

Upon *a* as a phonetic remnant or corruption of *in*, *on*, and *of*, we find the remark that "even this *a* before vowels is sometimes changed to *an*," of which such examples as "set an edge" and "stand an end" are cited. But there is no change of *a* to *an* here; such phrases as "set *a* edge" and "stand *a* end" being unknown. Dr. Schmidt has been here following the *ignis fatuus* of a mere misprint, *an* for *on*. But he does more when he adds that in "They said they were an-hungry" we have "a solecism formed in derision by Coriolanus." In this compact opinion Dr. Schmidt is right except upon three points. The phrase is not a solecism; it is not used in derision; it is not formed by Coriolanus. This every reader knows who (to go no farther) remembers his English Bible: "And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward *an hungered*," Matt. iv. 2; "What David did when he . . . was *an hungered*," Mark ii. 25; and there are half a dozen more instances. And see the following from Lodge's "Euphues his Legacie:" —

> Seeing the coast cleere, he shut the doores, and being sore *an hungred*, and seeing such good victuals, etc.

It is just possible, but very doubtful, that in this well-known old English phrase we have a phonetic representative of *enhungered*.

Queen Katherine says to Wolsey, "I utterly abhor you for my judge," and Blackstone remarked that this is "a term of the canon law." Therefore Dr. Schmidt will have it that "hence, in comical imitation of the judicial language," Antipholus exclaims, —

> She that doth call me husband, even my soul
> Doth for a wife abhor.
>
> Comedy of Errors, Act III. Sc. 2.

How thoroughly German this is, to tie the two things together, and evolve one out of the other! It would have occurred to no English editor any more than to Shakespeare himself. It is all abroad. Antipholus is not speaking comically, he was never more serious in his life; and he uses *abhor* just in the sense in which it is used by all Shakespeare's other personages, Queen Katherine included — the ordinary sense. For Shakespeare himself had not the slightest notion of using the word in its canonical sense in "Henry VIII.;" and of that sense we may be sure he was quite ignorant. He merely took both words, *abhor* and *refuse*, in this passage, right out of Holinshed, just as he found them.

In regard to such words as *about*, the Shakespeare Lexicon darkens counsel by setting up divisions of their meaning which are senseless; which in reality do not exist. For example, "hang no more about me." and "you have not the book of riddles about you," head respectively the quotations in two articles, with an attempt at a distinction of meaning; the meaning in all being absolutely the same. The Lexicon is full of such futile work. Of *about* as used with the sense "to a certain point, to an appointed or desired place," we have the Host's speech, in the "Merry Wives," Act II. Sc. 3: "I will bring the doctor about by the fields," cited as an example, with the gloss, "*i. e.*, to the appointed place." But who needs to be told that what the host says is that he will bring the doctor by a roundabout, unobserved way! He says to Page and Slender, "Go you *through the town*, . . . and I will bring the doctor *about by the fields*." Of the same meaning we have "the wind is come about" cited as an example, with the added gloss "has become favourable." Not so at all. The wind *may* come about and become favorable, as it does in this case; but it may just as well come about and blow a hurri-

cane, or from an unfavorable quarter. It comes about when, as Bardolph might say, it comes about.

Dr. Schmidt takes it upon him not infrequently to rebuke English editors of Shakespeare, and quite sharply. For example, he says that in the line of "Romeo and Juliet," —

> Young Abraham Cupid, he that shot so trim, —
> Act II. Sc. 1.

"modern editors quite preposterously" read "Young *Adam* Cupid." Now among the editors thus sorely shent are Steevens, Dyce, the "Cambridge" editors, Rolfe and Dr. Furness. But perhaps Dr. Schmidt thinks it becoming in a deutscher Realschuldirector to snub such Englishmen upon their view of the language of Shakespeare. It would have been better for him, however, to choose other occasions than those he has taken for this amusement, as we shall see. As to *Abraham* (which surely is here either a misprint of *Adam* mistaken for *Abram*, or the old irregular form of *Auburn*), even were it to be retained, nothing could be more absurd than the reason for such retention assigned in the Lexicon, that it is "in derision of the eternal boyhood of Cupid, though, in fact, he was at least as old as father Abraham;" which in its mingling of tenuous subtlety and literal pre-post-erroneousness approaches perilously near absolute nonsense. But as to Abraham, Dr. Schmidt seems in a parlous state that would have delighted Touchstone; for his very next article is, "Abram = Abraham, in the language of Shylock." He is then actually ignorant, or had forgotten, that the patriarch's name was Abram, and that it was not until he was ninety years old and nine that his name became Abraham, the change having been made by special divine command. Abram makes his appearance in the tenth chapter of Genesis, and it is not until the seventeenth that he is called Abraham.

Acknowledge furnishes us with a mistake of a sort which is characteristic of this Lexicon. The gloss "to claim acquaintance of" is given for the passage in the XXXVIth Sonnet: —

> I may not evermore acknowledge thee
> Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame.

But here it is the person addressed who *claims* acquaintance, which claim the speaker says he may no more acknowledge.

Add is said to mean "to make out by arithmetical addition," in Moth's verse-trap (Love's Labour's Lost, Act III. Sc. 1), —

> The fox, the ape and the humble-bee
> Were still at odds, being but three;
> Until the goose came out of door
> And stay'd the odds by adding four.

It is to be hoped that the Realschuldirector did not use this as an example in his teaching of arithmetic. For upon a moment's reflection he will see that if the goose had *added* four, she would not have stayed the odds at all, but would merely have made three seven! He would have contributed to the understanding of Shakespeare, if he had remarked that in this passage *adding* is heedlessly written for *making*. The goose, by coming out, made four instead of the odd number three.

I am skipping, and must skip, over many articles which arrested my progress; and I shall be obliged, so tedious and so unwelcome is this work, to touch but here and there. I must pause, however, for a moment upon the explanation of the very difficult passage (Antony and Cleopatra, Act II. Sc. 2), —

> Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,
> So many mermaids, tended her i' th' eyes,
> And made their bends adornings;

where the Lexicon tells us that the last line means, "regarded her with such veneration as to reflect beauty on her, to make her more beautiful by their looks," — of all the glosses that have been given, certainly the most far-fetched and insufferable. The passage probably was intended to have its simplest, baldest meaning; that Cleopatra's female attendants were so graceful that their bows and curtsies (called bends by Shakespeare) became an added adornment

to the scene. Compare the passage in North's Plutarch, which Shakespeare was working into blank verse: —

"Her ladies and gentlewomen also, the fairest of them were apparelled like the Nereids (which are the mermaids of the waters), and *like the Graces*."

Why does Dr. Schmidt tell us that *aguize*, in "I do aguize a natural prompt alacrity," means "to own with pride, to enjoy." There is in it no sense of pride, still less of enjoyment. It is merely a rare word for "acknowledge," "confess." Dr. Schmidt would have found it so defined by Bailey, 1724, and by Johnson and Nares and Halliwell; the latter three citing this very passage. A like mistake is made frequently; as for example, "*archery*, skill of an archer," has the gloss of "hit with Cupid's archery;" in which there is no question of skill, but merely of shooting with the bow.

And what sort of understanding of English is it that in —

> Every minute is expectancy
> Of more arrivance —

takes *arrivance* to mean "company coming"? The reading of the folio, "arrivancy," should have taught the Dr. Schmidt better. What was expected was acts of arrival.

Arrivance in the sense of company coming is like "There were many arrivals this afternoon, and some of the arrivals went to the new Caravanserai Hotel;" which, although it may be found in some newspapers, and heard from some lips, is neither sense nor English. An arrival is an act.

Ascaunt (if it be retained in preference to the better reading, *aslant*) in the passage, "There is a willow grows ascaunt the brook," does not mean "across." Indeed, that is just what it does not mean. It means "obliquely," "leaning to one side." Such willows by such brooks lean over them, and never at right angles with the stream, but always inclined more or less up or down, — aslant.

Most misleading to any student of English is the asser-

tion, under *ask*, that it is used "with a double accusative in the same sense" in the passage, "Ask me no reason," "Merry Wives of Windsor," Act II. Sc. 1. Here are not two accusatives. In "Whom did he ask? He asked me," *me* is accusative or objective; but in "He asked me my reason," me is genitive, or instrumental. Dr. Schmidt has been misled by an assumed analogy with the Latin *rogo*. In the next article the same misapprehension appears. We are told that there is a double accusative in "must ask my child forgiveness" (Tempest, Act V. Sc. 1). *Child* is in no sense the object of *ask*. The construction is, "ask forgiveness [of] my child."

Assemblance, in "What care I for the limb, the thewes, the stature, and big assemblance of a man" (2 Henry IV., Act III. Sc. 2), is glossed as meaning "external aspect." But then comes an appealing cry in parenthesis, "or can it possibly be = the conglomerate?" How could it possibly be anything else? — only we poor English folk do not feel obliged to use quite so big a word for it as conglomerate.

Attaint is incorrectly said to mean "convicted of capital treason." Attainder is a legislative, not a juridical act. It is always by bill in Parliament. The Earl of Strafford was attainted because his persecutors despaired of convicting him of high treason.

Ay. It surely must be merely because of the Germanhood of Dr. Schmidt that he says that *ay* is used for *why* in passages like these: "I would resort to her at night. Ay, but the doors be locked." "Ay, but she 'll think that it is spoke in hate." In both these passages (which are both from "The Two Gentlemen of Verona"), *ay* means simply "yes," in the connective, talk-continuing way in which it is now used. These cases are selected as examples of error, because the context in both makes both the error and the true sense clear, and in each in a different way. In the first, the colloquial *why* (omitted in the Lexicon) is a part of the speech to which *why* begins the reply, and accomplishes our purpose by contrast, thus (Act III. Sc. 1): —

Val. Why, then, I would resort to her by night.
Duke. Ay, but the doors be lock'd, etc.

In the second (Act III. Sc. 2) it so happens that the *ay* cited and glossed in the Lexicon is immediately followed by *ay*, and that the context shows to any English-speaking person that the meaning of both is the same, and what that meaning is: —

Pro. The best way is to slander Valentine
With falsehood, cowardice, and poor descent,
Three things that women highly hold in hate.
Duke. *Ay*, but she 'll think that it is spoke in hate.
Pro. *Ay*, if his enemy deliver it.

In all these cases, it need hardly be said *yes* may be substituted for *ay* without affecting in any way the meaning, the tone, or the colloquial character of the dialogue.

Bacon, we are told, is "hog's flesh pickled." No, as all English-speaking persons know. Pickle is a fluid, brine, with sometimes an addition of vinegar. The distinctive quality of bacon is that it is cured dry; hung up to dry in smoke.

Bait, as a verb, in the following passage is said to be "of uncertain signification:" —

Ye are lazy knaves,
And here ye lie, baiting of bombards, when
Ye should do service.

And we have the query "= to broach?" Not at all. To bait is to eat or drink lightly, "between whiles." People on a short journey stop and bait; *i. e.*, refresh themselves. These knaves, instead of doing their duty, were drinking "by-drinks" from the bombards of liquor.

In Macbeth's phrase, "upon the bank and school of time," as it is printed in the folio, Dr. Schmidt retains *school* and suggests that we should read *bench*, to be consistent with *school*: doing this because he does not perceive (very naturally) that *school* is a mere phonetic irregularity for *shoal*. But still, what manner of Shakespearean scholar is he who, for any reason, would have Macbeth say, —

But here, upon this bench and school of time,
We 'll jump the life to come,

instead of "upon this bank and shoal of time"?

To sell one a bargain does not mean "to embarrass one by an unexpected reply," but "to set a trap for one, to mislead and deceive him, to take him in," in trade, and so, metaphorically, in speech, as Costard does in "Love's Labour 's Lost," Act III. Sc. 1, the only passage in which Shakespeare uses the phrase: —

> The boy hath sold him a bargain, a goose, that 's flat.
> Sir, your pennyworth is good, an your goose be fat.
> To sell a bargain well is as cunning as *fast and loose*.

Batten means properly "to grow fat," as Dr. Schmidt defines it; and I remark upon it here merely to say that, in my opinion, in both the passages in which it appears in Shakespeare's plays he misused it, manifestly, in the sense "to feed grossly." He misapprehended the meaning of the word, as he did that of many others.

> Follow your function; go, and batten on cold bits.
> Coriolanus, Act IV. Sc. 5.

Its true meaning appears in the following passage: —

> *Itha.* Why master, will you poison her with a mess of rice porridge? That will preserve life, make her round and plump, and *batten* more than you are aware. Marlowe, The Jew of Malta, Act III. Sc. 4.

> Have you eyes?
> Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
> And batten on this moor?
> Hamlet, Act III. Sc. 4.

Bawd-born, in "bawd he is doubtless, and of antiquity too, bawd-born," certainly does not mean "a bawd from birth," but simply "born of a bawd."

The verb *to be* is treated with multitudinous divisions and subdivisions, in which I note many misapprehensions and overstrained subtleties of discrimination, which I must pass over, and remark briefly upon the last division, in which we are told that "verbs neuter are often conjugated with *to be* instead of *to have*," as "this gentleman is happily arrived." Often! Is it possible that a scholar makes a Shakespeare Lexicon, and does not know that in all such cases *to be* is the proper verb, the one used by all writers of good English, and that the use of *to have* is very recent and not yet

fully recognized? And what shall be said of the subsequent remark, "but the use of *is* instead of *have* in transitive verbs must be considered as an inadvertence in writing, etc.!" Now Shakespeare was inadvertent enough in his writing upon all points of grammatical accuracy; but whatever may be the better form here, there was no inadvertence: such forms as "the King is set him down to sleep" being common with the best writers, not only in Shakespeare's time, but long afterward.

Beadle, "a public whipper," is simply mistaken and laughable; although beadles did sometimes whip, as also hangmen did.

The divisions and subdivisions of meaning and uses of *to bear* are even more extravagant than those of *to be*. Common sense would reduce them all to three or four.

"Modern editors" are shent again for taking the forms *berrord*, *berard*, and *bearard* for *bear-ward!* Not unnaturally, our German professor does not see that the former are mere phonetic spellings of the pronunciation of the latter; as Warwick is pronounced not *War-wick*, but *Warrick*.

Behove is defined as meaning "to be advantageous to" in such passages as "there are cozeners abroad, therefore it behoves men to be wary." Quite wrongly. *Behove* always means "it is the duty of, it becomes."

Bent, we are told, in "her affections have their full bent," and the like, is "properly an expression of archery." Quite wrongly, again. When we speak of the bent of a statesman's policy, or the bent of a man's mind, or the bent of a woman's affections, there is not, nor was there ever any allusion to the bending of a bow. It is merely a stronger English word, and a better, for "inclination, tendency."

Bevel does not mean "crooked," or anything like it, as every carpenter knows. A bevel on the contrary is straight. *Bevel* means merely "at an acute angle with, diagonal, sloping;" what women, in cutting dresses, call "bias." Here Dyce and old Bailey are wrong also. In the only passage in which Shakespeare uses the word (CXXIth Sonnet), —

> No, I am that I am; and they that level
> At my abuses reckon up their own.
> I may be straight, though they themselves be bevel;

the meaning is that the others go off at an angle from the path of rectitude; and the farther they go, the greater of course their aberration.

Billingsgate, "a place in England," is a most extraordinary definition. So is Birmingham a place in England. Billingsgate is, and for centuries has been, the great fish-market of London, where formerly was the Billings Gate.

Blue-eyed. Dr. Schmidt has "authority" for saying that this phrase, in "this blue-eyed-hag" (Tempest, Act I. Sc. 2), means "having a blueness, a black circle about the eyes." I wish merely to record here my own conviction that Shakespeare had in mind that pale-blue, fish-like, malignant eye, which is often seen in hag-like women.

Body. "the frame of an animal." No, surely; not the frame, but the substance. The skeleton is the frame.

Bodykins, "a scurrilous exclamation." But of what meaning? Nor is it scurrilous. "God's bodikins" merely means "by God's little body."

Bone. Mercutio's "O, their *bones!* their *bones!*" is pronounced "unintelligible," and it is suggested that he meant, "I should like to beat them." Mercutio (Romeo and Juliet, Act II. Sc. 4) is ridiculing the travelled fops, with their "*perdona mi's;*" and "their bones" are merely their "*bon, bon.*" French words were almost invariably pronounced in the plain English way. For example, *Cœur de Lion*, bluntly *Cordelion*.

Bow-hand. Dr. Schmidt queries, "The hand which draws the bow, or that which holds the bow?" The latter; as every one knows who has practised archery; and also the origin of the phrase "wide o' th' bow-hand" — "far from the mark;" its only use by Shakespeare. The bow has to be held very firmly by the left hand against the pull of the string by the right; and when the string is loosed at the shot, the reaction, unless the bow-hand is very steady, takes

the bow, and with it the arrow, to the left; so that most poor shots are likely to be wide o' th' bow-hand, *i. e.*, on the left side.

I come now to an article of such an extraordinary nature, and yet so significant of the writer's fitness to explain Shakespeare's language, that I wish to say (what, by the way, is true in every case), that I give it without a shade of variation, *verbatim, literatim et punctuatim.* At the end of the article on the noun *boy*, after a wholly needless setting forth of all the variations in the sorts of boys suggested by Shakespeare's text, — needless because any intelligent reader sees and knows them untold, — we come upon a boy who, the intelligent reader will at once confess, is a youngster quite new to him. Cleopatra, in the bitterness of defeat and prospective captivity, says: —

> Antony
> Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
> Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness, etc.
> Act V. Sc. 2.

This the Shakespeare Lexicon thus sets forth and explains: "I shall see some squeaking Cleopatra-boy my greatness, *i. e.*, I shall see some boy, performing the part of Cleopatra, as my highness." This "squeaking Cleopatra-boy" certainly beats all the famous camels that have ever been evolved from the German moral consciousness. As a compounded substantive he surpasses, far surpasses, that "green-one" by which Macbeth's "making the green, one red" was converted into "making the green-one, red." Here "boy" is not a substantive, but, by one of Shakespeare's happy and most characteristic feats of language, a verb! No reader — no English reader, at least, who is intelligent enough to read Shakespeare at all — needs to be told that what the vanquished queen says she shrinks from is seeing some young male actor boy her greatness. What Dr. Schmidt finds in the text is a "Cleopatra-boy" appearing as Cleopatra's highness! The substantive arrangement of the passage, the hyphen, and the parenthetical pointing of "per-

forming the part of Cleopatra" in the gloss leave no loophole of doubt on this point. It is the most self-stultifying comment upon Shakespeare that was ever written. I have seen this Lexicon mentioned with respect as an "authority" upon Shakespeare's language. Had those who thus characterized it ever examined it, even in my cursive, casual way?

Dr. Schmidt is a good English scholar, a good grammarian, and he writes English notably well for a German; but he frequently shows his inability to apprehend English idiom. For example, he tells us in his grammarian's way that *brave* is found "followed by a superfluous *it*," in "Lucius and I'll go brave it at the court" (Titus Andronicus, Act IV. Sc. 1). Here *it* is not at all superfluous. Without the pronoun the sentence would not be English. So we say "to face it out," "to carry it boldly," etc. And in the expressive slang phrase "to go it strong," the slang is not in the *it*.

In saying that *bung*, in Doll Tear-Sheet's "away you cut-purse rascal, you filthy bung, away," is "a low term for a sharper," Dr. Schmidt expands Mr. Dyce's gloss, by which he has been misled. The word is, indeed, a low term here, but not exactly for a sharper, although it is applied to a filthy one.

Buttery is not "a room where provisions are laid up," but, on the contrary, one where they are distributed or dispensed. The store-room and the cellar are where they are laid up.

Buz (in Hamlet, Act II. Sc. 2) is most certainly not "an interjection, or rather, a sibilant sound to command silence." It is merely Hamlet's whimsical, scornful way of saying "fudge! nonsense!" Wherefore Polonius immediately begins to protest, "Upon mine honour" — and Hamlet again jeers him.

Here is another gloss that will astonish every reader by its far-fetched ineptness. In "Antony and Cleopatra," Act I. Sc. 2, Mecænas, describing the Egyptian festivities, says, "Eight wild boars roasted whole," etc.; to which Enobar-

bus replies, "This was but as a fly by an eagle;" *i. e.*, this was a very small matter compared to some others: plain enough of itself, but made certain by the continuation of the speech, "we had much more monstrous matter of feast," etc. But the Shakespeare Lexicon says Enobarbus means this was "as a fly for every one to feed on in a company of eagles!"

In Hermia's exclamation (Midsummer-Night's Dream, Act III. Sc. 2) "you canker-blossom," the Lexicon tells us that *canker-blossom* is a "blossom eaten by a canker or a *canker-bloom*." But it does not mean a blossom or a bloom at all. Hermia calls Helena one *who cankers* blossoms, one who destroys the blossoms of hope in love, as the canker-worm destroys flowers, — a canker-blossom. So she continues, "You thief of love."

Carve. Of this word in Falstaff's "she discourses, she carves," (Merry Wives of Windsor, Act I. Sc. 3) the Lexicon gives the gloss "to show great courtesy and affability." Now this is no meaning for the word. Courtesy and affability might lead to carving, but they might exist in the highest degree without it. This error is the less excusable because the author of the Lexicon refers to Dyce's Glossary, where the correct interpretation is set forth. Carving was a motion of the hands, and particularly of the little finger. The point was first settled by a citation from Overbury's "Characters," p. 16, made in "Shakespeare's Scholar," 1854. Mr. Lettsom (whom Dr. Schmidt seems to have followed), in a note to William Sidney Walker's "Critical Examination," 1860, says (Vol. III. p. 25): —

> It appears from the curious passage adduced from Overbury by Mr. Grant White that there really was "a sign of intelligence made by the little finger as the glass was raised to the mouth," and that this *bewraied* carving. Carving, therefore (at least this sort of it) must have been not this or any other sign, but something that this sign indicated. Perhaps, however, some words may be lost in Overbury.

This ingenious inference was, however, set aside by a citation from Littleton in my first edition. The whole matter was thus set forth in Dyce's Glossary, to which, as I have said, Dr. Schmidt refers his readers.

More recently Mr. Grant White has still further illustrated the word *carves*. "Thus," he says, in "A Very Woman," among the *characters* published with Sir Thomas Overbury's "*Wife*," "Her lightness gets her to swim at the top of the table, where her wrie little finger bewraies carving; her neighbours at the latter end know they are welcome, and for that purpose she quencheth her thirst." Sig. E. 3d ed. 1632. See also Littleton's Latin Dictionary, 1675, "*A Carver:* chironomus." "Chironomus, *One that maketh apish motions with his hands.*" "Chironomia: *A kind of gesture with the hands, either in dancing, carving of meat, or pleading, etc., etc.*"

Dr. Schmidt should therefore have known that carving was not showing great courtesy or affability, but specifically a motion with the hands or fingers. Littleton's full definitions, particularly when taken in connection with Overbury's detailed and graphic description, leave no room for doubt on the subject.

Castle. Prince Hal, addressing Falstaff (1 Henry IV. Act II.) calls him "my old lad of the castle," which the Lexicon says is "a familiar appellation, equivalent to *old buck*." Not so at all; as every student of Shakespeare knows. The name of Falstaff in the play, as originally written, was Old-Castle, which was changed, after the play had become popular, for reasons given in the Introduction to "2 Henry IV." in the "Riverside" edition. The Prince's speech is a remnant of the play in its original form. In reference to his name Hal calls the fat knight "my *old* lad of the *castle*." The same word in another passage (Titus Andronicus, Act III. Sc. 1), "and rear'd aloft the bloody battle-axe, writing destruction on the enemy's castle," gives Dr. Schmidt another opportunity of aggressive error. He says "the word has unnecessarily been interpreted in the sense of casque, helmet. Marcus says, each hand of yours has been employed in defending Rome and in assailing and destroying the strongholds of enemies." Dr. Schmidt seems to have been again misled by the learned and ingenious editor of Walker, the value of whose criticisms (Mr. Lettsom's) is in most cases limited only by his knowledge of the subject in hand. On this passage he writes in a note (Vol. III. p. 219): —

"Walker seems not to have been aware that Theobald had conjectured

casque. Grose says, "The castle was, perhaps, a figurative name for a close head-piece, deduced from its enclosing and defending the head, as a castle did the whole body; or a corruption from the old French word, *casquetel*, a small, light helmet." This dubious assertion of a modern writer, *who quotes no authority for his opinion*, is the only support yet discovered for castle in the sense of *helmet*. *Casquetel*, I suspect, is *maris expers*. Cotgrave has only *casque* and *casquet*.

All this is wrong. *Castle* was the name of a strong helmet. In my first edition I expressed a doubt as to the etymology *Casquetel* ("a small, light helmet") would not do); but there and in the "Riverside Shakespeare" I gave the definition "helmet," having in mind passages like the following, of which I remember several, but of which only this conclusive one comes readily to my hand. It is from Sir Thomas Mallory's "King Arthur," and the date of it, 1470 (first printed in 1485), relieves it from the reproach of modernness, while the chivalric subject of the book makes it authoritative.

> Doe thou thy best, said Sir Gawaine, therefore hie thee fast that thou wert gone, and wit thou well we shall soone come after, and breake the *strongest castle that thou hast upon thy head*.
>
> King Arthur, ed. Wright, III. 304.

This also renders nugatory the assertion in the Lexicon that in "Troilus and Cressida" (Act V. Sc. 2), "stand fast and wear a castle on thy head," *castle* is "used as the emblem of security." Shakespeare uses Mallory's very words.

Clear-stories. It will hardly be believed that a sane and learned man, undertaking to explain Shakespeare's language, refuses to accept this word with its well-known architectural meaning, in the Clown's speech to Malvolio, who is shut up in the dark (Twelfth Night, Act IV. Sc. 2), because Feste says the clear-stories are lustrous as ebony, and "the poet would not speak of windows lustrous as ebony." Nay verily; indeed he would not; nor of "windows transparent as barricadoes," nor of clear-stories "toward the south-north." But the Clown might, and does.

Consummation, in Hamlet's "'t is a consummation devoutly to be wished," is glossed as meaning "end, death;" an error of a sort common in the Lexicon. Here "consum-

mation" does not *mean* "death," nor anything like it. What Hamlet says is that death is a consummation (a completion) to be wished.

Colours. "Fear no colours." Neither Mr. Dyce nor Dr. Schmidt does more than to repeat Nares's gloss that this is probably a proverbial phrase, meaning "to fear no enemy;" and, according to my observation, the illustrative passages cited by editors merely repeat the phrase without giving any limit of its meaning. To take that out of the category of probability, I therefore quote the following passage from a contemporary writer: —

> To which I answer that these *foruscites* [brawlers] which haunt the passages and highways are not worthy to be named the same day with those good fellowes who brave it out in other places: for they *feare no colours*, but adventure to set upon thrice as many as themselves; whereas these faint-heated *foruscites* (as I was then informed) never set upon any (by their good wills) except they be two to one at the least.
>
> World of Wonders (1607), p. 146.

Cresset was not "a fire made in a high place or suspended in the air." It was not a fire at all. It was the basket made of wire or iron-hoops in which the fire was made.

Crestless does not mean "not dignified with coat armour;" but simply "without a crest." Many coats of arms, of antiquity and honor, were, and some still are, without crests.

Curfew was not "a signal to retire to rest," but a signal to extinguish fires, as every intelligent reader knows, and as the word itself shows. Its history is well-known. It was at first rung at seven o'clock, then at eight, then at nine, as in New England until lately.

Apropos of the singular use of *curfew* in "Romeo and Juliet" (Act IV. Sc. 4), —

> The *curfew* bell hath rung, 't is three o'clock,

which editors (myself included) have supposed to be a slip for the "matin bell." I find the following remarkable passage in "Frank Farleigh," a novel written apparently in the early part of this century. A party of young "bloods" going home, flown with wine, about three in the morning, see a man entering the church with a lantern.

"That 's the sexton and bell-ringer," returned Coleman: "they keep up the old custom at Hillingford of *ringing the curfew at daybreak:* and he 's going about it now, I suppose." Chap. 15.

And again in the same boisterous scene: —

This gentleman has been sent down here by the venerable Society of Antiquaries to ascertain whether the old custom of ringing the *curfew* is properly performed here.

This seems to me the more noteworthy because I find in the same book the very uncommon word *whittle* twice used for *shawl*, in the most matter-of-course way; *hwitel* being the Anglo-Saxon for a white mantle or overdress of a woman or a priest.

Daywoman, "a woman hired by the day, a chairwoman." This is amazing. The daywoman is the dairy-woman. Here *day* is not an abbreviation of *dairy*, but is the old Middle English *daye*, a dairy-maid. Dr. Schmidt's "chairwoman," too, is unknown in English. A *charwoman* is a woman who does chares or chores.

Dr. Schmidt characterizes "nothing but death shall e'er divorce my dignities" as a "singular passage," in its use of *divorce*. What is there singular about it? Nothing could be simpler or more natural. I remark upon this only to make it the occasion of saying that many passages are thus misrepresented.

Do de is not an "inarticulate sound uttered by a person shivering with cold." It is very distinctly articulate; and it has nothing to do with cold. It is merely senseless gibberish, uttered by Edgar in his character of a mad beggar. Probably Shakespeare had heard it from some poor bedlamite.

Dote, "to act or speak irrationally." Not so, as every one knows. Doting has nothing to do with acting or speaking. It is a mere condition of the mind. A dumb man may dote; a palsied man often dotes.

Double-henned. — "now my double-henn'd sparrow: perhaps = sparrow with a double hen, *i. e.* with a female married to two cocks, and hence false to both." It might be

supposed, from his name, that Dr. Schmidt was a German; but very plainly he is an Irishman.

Dowle. The Lexicon, in glossing this word (in Ariel's "one dowle that 's in my plume") as "fibre of down in a feather," is open to no criticism to which every modern editor of Shakespeare has not exposed himself. But I am now satisfied that for *dowle* we should read *down*, of which the former was merely the contraction of a variant spelling, — *dowlne*. This I found recently on referring hastily to "The Taming of *a* Shrew:" —

> As chaste as Phebe in her summer sports,
> As soft and tender as the azure *dowlne*
> That circles Citherea's silver doves.
>
> P. 191, ed. Nicholls.

On examining the folio of 1623, in the few passages in which *down* is used, I found these two instances in one passage: —

> By his Gates of breath,
> There lyes a *dowlney* feather, which stirres not:
> Did he suspire, that light and weightlesse *dowlne*
> Perforce must move.
>
> 2 Henry IV., Act IV. Sc. 2.

It is clear that in these passages, as well as in that from "The Taming of a Shrew," *dowlne* = merely *down;* and that *dowle* is a mere variant spelling of *dowlne* would be clear even without the evidence of the following passage from an Eclogue by John Davies: —

> What though time yet hannot *bedowld* thy chin.
>
> *Apud* Dyce.

The lexicographers have been misled as to this word like the rest of us. All their examples make *against* there being a distinct word *dowle* meaning a fibre of *down*. The three forms were manifestly one word with identical meaning; and in *dowlne* the *l* was silent, we may be sure.[1]

Entitled. Upon the use of this word in the following passage (XXXVIIth Sonnet), as it is misprinted in the quarto: —

> For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
> Or any of these all, or all, or more
> Intitled in their [thy] parts do crowned sit; —

[1] As to such silent letters see *Everyday English*, pp. 244 ff.

Dr. Schmidt, who retains the misprint, remarks that the last clause means "or more excellencies, having a just claim to the first place as their due;" to which lucid explanation he adds, "Blundering modern editors, 'entitled in *thy* parts.'" Now as this "nice derangement of epitaphs" is one to which our Lexicon-maker not infrequently treats those from whom he differs, I shall merely remark here that among the "blundering modern editors" are Malone, Capell, Collier, Knight, Halliwell, Furness, Rolfe, Dyce, and even the Cambridge editors;[1] indeed, every editor of distinction whose mother-tongue was Shakespeare's. This emendation, which is one of the obvious sort, is to be made without discussion or remark.

Entreatment. In this passage of Polonius's counsel to Ophelia, —

> Set your entreatments at a higher rate
> Than a command to parley,

we have the astonishing gloss of *entreatment*, "the invitations which you receive." Set invitations *received* at a higher rate, etc.! That is just what the word cannot mean. It may be loosely used in the sense of "yielding to entreaty;" but I am rather inclined to think, with Caldecott and Dyce, that it means "entertainments." One or the other certainly.

Eternal. Of this word, the Lexicon, following Walker, gives in three important passages the explanation that it is "used to express extreme abhorrence." The passages are: —

> There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd
> The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome, etc.
> Julius Cæsar, Act I. Sc. 2.

> Some eternal villain,
> Some busy and insinuating rogue.
> Othello, Act IV. Sc. 2.

> O proud Death,
> What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,

[1] I say even the Cambridge editors, because the text of that edition was formed upon the principle that no old reading was to be changed if it gave a sense; and that if it did not, it was still to be retained unless a single indisputable emendation had been discovered.

> That thou so many princes at a shot
> So bloodily hast struck!
>
> Hamlet, Act V. Sc. 2.

Mr. Walker, who was the first to comment upon this word, has misled Dr. Schmidt, and it would seem some others. Mr. Dyce leaves it discreetly alone. But in these passages, and in corresponding use elsewhere, as in "eternal villain," which he quotes from Allan Cunningham, and "the Yankee tarnal," to which he refers, *eternal* is not used, either by intention or by mistake, for *infernal*, which is Mr. Walker's assumption. The passages above do indeed invite such an explanation: "infernal devil," "infernal villain," "infernal cell," would occur to the most superficial glossologist. But the word was not so used or misused; of which here is evidence, from a contemporary Shakespearean publication. The propitiatory address to the reader in the ante-natal edition of "Troilus and Cressida," 1609, begins "*Eternall* reader, you have here a new play, never stal'd with the stage," etc. I remember other like instances, but have not time to look them up; nor is there any need; one such example is as good as forty. Manifestly, this writer did not intend to open his address in favor of his new play by "expressing extreme abhorrence" of his reader, with Dr. Schmidt, or by calling him "infernal reader," with Mr. Walker. And yet the word is used just as it is in the passages quoted above from Shakespeare, and as the rustic Yankee uses it in "*tarnal*." In all these cases the word is used merely as an expletive of excess. It means simply boundless, immeasurable, and corresponds very nearly in its purport to the word *egregious*, as it is used by some of our elder writers, and nowadays in Spanish, *egregio autore*. It is a mere *façon de parler*, like *awful*, which, in much the same sense, is now heard constantly, and found in all books of the present day except those of a serious character. When a rustic Yankee says that a girl is "tarnal hansome," he does not mean that she is at all infernal, nor to express extreme abhorrence of her, any more than a young swell who calls his favorite an "awfully jolly girl" means

that she inspires him with awe, or than another sort of man who calls his enslaver "a dayvlish fine woman" means that she is at all like the Fiend, although he might perhaps safely venture that assertion. In Cassius's "eternal devil," Emilia's "eternal villain," Fortinbras's "eternal cell," and the "eternal reader" of the address in "Troilus and Cressida" the epithet is one merely of hyperbolical distinction.

Eysel: upon Hamlet's demand to Laertes (Act V. Sc. 2),

Woo 't drink up eisel, eat a crocodile?

Dr. Schmidt thus delivers himself: "Hamlet's questions are apparently ludicrous, and drinking vinegar in order to exhibit grief by a wry face [!!] seems much more to the purpose than drinking up rivers. As for the crocodile, it must perhaps be remembered that it is a *mournful* animal." After reading a comment like that, one is inclined to say with Lear, "my brain begins to turn." Apparently ludicrous! Hamlet was unfortunately never quite so earnest nor so single-minded as at this moment. He was simply in a frenzy, raving. His lips brought forth monsters. As to the mournfulness of the crocodile, that is, as the ladies say, "too funny for anything!" If Shakespeare had known of any animal bigger, more terrible, and more loathsome than the crocodile, we should have had that — if its name would have run easily into his verse.

Fencer does not mean "a master of fence, one who teaches the art of using the sword," any more than *fiddler* means "a professor of the violin." It means merely "one who fences, with whom fencing is a habit."

Fetch. When Don Pedro (Much Ado about Nothing, Act I. Sc. 2) praises Hero, Claudio replies, "You speak this to fetch me in, my lord," where Dr. Schmidt tells us that "fetch me" means "to take in, dupe." Not so at all. Don Pedro was not taking in or duping his young officer. What occasion had he to do so? Claudio means, as we all apprehend without conscious thought, that his superior designs, by a gracious compliment to his mistress, to draw him out of the slightly antagonistic attitude into which he has been driven by the gibes of Benedick.

Frame. Leonato (Much Ado, Act IV. Sc. 1), referring to his regret that he had but one child, says, —

> Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?

and here Dr. Schmidt would have *frame* = "mould for castings" (*i. e.*, here, womb), with the extended gloss, "did I grumble against the niggardness of nature's casting mould?" A most elaborate misapprehension. Nature's frame is merely nature's order, disposal of matter; as in "God framed the heavens and the earth."

> Alas, that but on[e] breast Dame Nature did me frame!
> Seneca, 1581, f. 191 *b*.

> Who can his Nature's frame
> Forsake, or cross the dictates of the same?
> J. Quarles' Triumphant Chastity, 1684, p. 86.

Full. In the same play, when Beatrice retorts sharply upon Benedick, Don Pedro says, "You have it full, Benedick," which, according to Dr. Schmidt, means, "You are the man, you will do;" and he refers (vainly) to another use of *full* for support of this astonishing misinterpretation. Don Pedro merely says, "You have all you want, all you can carry." Here *have it* is used as *habet* was in the Roman amphitheatre. I see, by the way, that upon this and the previous word Mr. Rolfe, in his excellent edition of "Much Ado," quotes what "Schmidt says," and tells us "Schmidt explains," etc. I cannot but think that that discriminating editor was misled by the imposing form and the easy-of-reference shape of the Lexicon. What need has Mr. Rolfe, or Dr. Furness, or Aldis Wright to go to Dr. Schmidt, or to any German, however learned, about the meaning of an English phrase? But even Skeat refers to the Shakespeare Lexicon. If a man will only put all he knows, or does not know, and in alphabetical order, so that it may be easy of reference, it will surely attain a certain vogue, and be referred to as "authority" with little discrimination of its real worth.

Gorbellied. This word (1 Henry IV., Act II. Sc. 2) is glossed both by Dyce and the Lexicon as meaning "swag

bellied, having a great paunch;" not quite correctly; although gorbellies are likely to have great paunches. See: —

Or els for some notable apparaunt marke on ones face, or his bodie they [the Greeks] have called him *Phiscon* or *Grypos:* as ye would saye gorbelley and hooke nosed. North's Plutarch, p. 242, ed. 1570.

Now $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\kappa\eta = botulus$, a sausage, or (meton.) a belly stuffed with dainties. "Gorbelly" means, therefore, "a glutton or gourmand." Thus: —

For some may say that it is not unlikely that Chanons, Priors, Abbotts, and other Pope's gross gorbellies should *make good cheer.*
World of Wonders (1607), p. 181.

And so Falstaff in the next breath called his victims "fat chuffs," which latter word means, not as the Lexicon has it, "a dull fellow who is well off but does not know how to enjoy his wealth," but "a Dives, a glutton, one who fares sumptuously every day."

Galenus affirmeth that the great *chuffes*, whose lyfe and occupation is feeding, never lyve longe, nor be helthful, and theyr mindes be soo wrapped wythe over moche blood and fatness, even as it were with myer, that they have no maner heuenly meditation, but do alwayes thynke uppon eatynge, drynkynge, etc., etc. De Morbo Gallico, 1539, sig. G, v.

Gossip does mean primarily "a sponsor at baptism." But Launce, when he says his Dulcinea is "not a maid, for she hath had gossips," does not mean that these gossips were "sponsors for a child of hers," which the Lexicon says he does. Far from it. He means that she has had gossiping companions, and then, in his whimsical, perversely-jesting mood, he assumes that these are such as come around a woman in child-bed, and that therefore she cannot be a maid.

Gyves means, as every one knows, fetters for the ankles that hamper movement; but, nevertheless, Hamlet's

> Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
> Convert his gyves to graces,
>
> Act IV. Sc. 7.

is made conspicuous among those passages as to which Dr. Schmidt goes near to astounding us by his capacity of inap-

prehension. He says, "an obscure passage, not yet explained or amended." Neither amendment nor explanation is required. Shakespeare never wrote more clearly. The comparison is merely of the great change in both instances; not of gyves to wood and graces to stone.

Hand in hand, in "as fair and as good, a kind of hand in hand comparison" means not "playing from one hand into the other, confounding two different things, handy dandy juggling;" but, as every one knows, simply "comparisoned, coupled, like two friends going hand in hand."

The Lexicon frequently misleads, as we have seen, by giving glosses which do indeed present *a* sense, but a sense which cannot be accepted by an intelligent English reader, and moreover one which runs beside the real meaning, but on a different line of thought. Such is the saying that *head*, in Othello's "the very head and front of my offending," means "the top, the summit," with the added gloss, "this is its height, as it were, and breadth." Not so, surely. The phrase is so plain and yet so idiomatic that it hardly admits explanation. When Othello says "the very head and front of my offending," he has no reference to the height of his offence; he means "this and nothing more is what confronts you in my conduct." Nor does *head*, in "this gallant head of war," mean "armed force," any more than it does in "made head against my power." "To make head" is "to be able to present a front, and to move onward." To this, an armed force may in many cases be necessary, but *head* does not therefore mean "an armed force," even in Shakespeare's use of it. Dr. Schmidt falls into the common error, here and elsewhere, of mistaking condition, accompaniment, or result, for meaning.

Heat. In "Twelfth Night" (Act I. Sc. 1), the Duke's messenger tells him of Olivia, that

> The element itself, till seven years' heat,
> Shall not behold her face.

That is, the very air shall not see her until seven summers have passed. But Dr. Schmidt will have *heat* here mean

"a course," as "at a race." This first heat, and second heat, and so forth, of the years in their race, surpasses Johnson's "panting Time toiled after him in vain."

Hob, "a frequent name among the common people." Yes; but so is "Diggory." This tells us nothing that a Lexicon should tell. *Hob* is a vulgar contraction of "Robert," thus, Robert, Robin, Rob, Bob, Hob.

Hole. The Lexicon is very amusing upon this word. Hortensio, in "Taming of the Shrew," pretending to be a music-master, says that his instrument, a lute, is in tune: Bianca tells him "the treble jars;" whereupon his rival, Lucentio, says, "Spit in the hole, man, and tune again." Here the Lexicon defines *hole* as "the hollow of the hand," with the full and expounded paraphrase "spit in your hand, take courage, and make a new effort." It seems almost trifling to say that what he was told to do was to spit in the peg-hole in the neck of the instrument, so that the peg would hold when he screwed up the string. Moreover, even in Shakespeare's time, gentlemen did not spit into their hands in the presence of ladies, if at all.

Land-damn. Whether this word, in "The Winter's Tale" (Act II. Sc. 1), "Would I knew the villain! I would land-damn him" is a sound reading or not, no one can meet with gravity Dr. Schmidt's suggestion. "Perhaps we ought to read, 'would I knew the villain! I would — *Lord*, damn him!'" When Dr. Schmidt meanders into the maze of conjectural criticism, — well, there he is. We shall next be indebted to him for discovering that Iago should say, not, "O my lord, beware of jealousy," but, "O my! — Lord! — Beware of jealousy."

Mien Dr. Schmidt pronounces "a word unknown to Shakespeare, but inserted by inexpert conjecturers" in two passages (for *mine*); and again he says "some modern editors, quite preposterously." It seems to me that for Dr. Schmidt to speak thus of English editors like Theobald, Steevens, Malone, Chalmers, and Knight is both unbecoming and unwise.

Mose in the chine has been defined simply as "a disease in horses," which gloss the Lexicon merely adopts. But the proper reading is "*mourn* in the chine," which will be found in the "Riverside" Shakespeare, with this confirmatory example: "In our abbey we never study, for fear of the mumps, which disease in horses is called mourning in the chine." Urquhart's "Rabelais" (1653), Book I. c. 59. And Cotgrave's Fr. and Eng. Dic. (1611) has "*Les Oreillons.* The mumpes, or mourning of the chine."

My. If Dr. Schmidt were English, I am persuaded that he would not have said that my is "superfluous" in such phrases as "I am one that is nourished by my victuals." There is a shade of meaning which is lost without the pronoun, as every English-speaking person knows. And in the last of the examples which he cites, "as full of quarrel as my young mistress's dog," the suppression of the pronoun would produce almost absolute nonsense.

Nag does not mean "a worthless horse," but, first, "a small horse," and then, "a family, every-day horse." In every one of the three instances in which Shakespeare uses the word, "shuffling nag," "Galloway nags," "ribaldred nag," the depreciatory part of the expression is in the epithet prefixed, not in *nag.* This misapprehension is of a sort which is not peculiar to the compiler of the Lexicon, who, however, presents us with many instances of it.

Napping, in the phrase "to take napping," does not mean "to take or surprise in the very act, in committing an offence." It means simply "to take off guard."

Native, we are told, is to be accepted in Coriolanus's speech, —

> The accusation
> Which they have often made against the senate,
> All cause unborn, could never be the native
> Of our so frank donation, —
>
> Act III. Sc. 1.

as meaning "national origin, source." This is sheer nonsense. "Some modern editors," Dr. Schmidt adds, [read] "*motive.*" Some! The "some" includes Johnson, Singer,

Chalmers, Halliwell, Dyce, Aldis Wright, and Rolfe; in fact, every editor of any reputation. *Native* has no proper place in the text, nor, as to this passage, in any Shakespeare Lexicon. This is one of the multitudinous examples of the inapprehensiveness as to Shakespeare of this accomplished and erudite grammarian.

Ne. In like manner he tells us that this word in Helena's speech, as printed in the folio (All 's Well, Act I. Sc. 2), "ne worse of worst extended," has been "differently and very unhappily corrected." He does not see that *ne* is a phonetic misprint of *nay*. Even the Cambridge edition has *nay*.

New-fangled does not mean "given to foppish love of fashionable finery." It does not mean "given to" anything nor "love of" anything; and, moreover, that which is fashionable may not be new-fangled. The phrase applies to things, not to persons. A dress may be new-fangled, or a fashion. A foppish person is likely to take to a new fangle, to new-fangled finery or fashion. In every case in which Shakespeare uses the word it has this meaning.

Noseless does not mean "having one's nose cut off;" for verily it may be knocked off, or wrung off, or shot off, or pulled off, or bitten off, or even blown off. *Noseless* means merely "without a nose."

O'ergalled, in "their eyes o'ergalled with recourse of tears," is strangely glossed as "too much injured and worn away." *O'ergalled* means, not "worn away," but simply "much inflamed, irritated, galled," by what are called "briny tears." So Hamlet, speaking of his mother's brief mourning, says: —

> Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
> Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
> She married.
>
> Act I. Sc. 2.

O'er-perch cannot mean "to fly over;" as "perch" does not mean "fly." In the only passage in which Shakespeare uses it, Romeo's "with love's light wings I did o'erperch these walls," it is a picturesque word, showing us the young lover touching for an instant the top of the wall as he surmounted it.

Offal is correctly defined as "waste meat, the parts of a butchered animal unfit for use." But most incorrectly we are told that when Hamlet says, "I should have fatted all the region-kites with this slave's offal," he means, "with this slave, who is no more worth than offal." There is no comparison of Claudius to offal. Hamlet says plainly that he should have given his uncle's carcass to the kites, that he should have butchered him and given his entrails to the birds of prey. Every intelligent English reader knows this.

One, we are told, was "probably sometimes pronounced *on*." Not so. *One* was pronounced with the pure *o* sound, to rhyme with *throne*. Dr. Schmidt was assisted by Walker, to whom he refers. All that Walker's examples go to prove is that *one* was not pronounced *wun*, which is true enough, with some small provincial exceptions. Dr. Schmidt might have found this set forth in the "Memorandums of English Pronunciation in the Elizabethan Era," in my first edition.[1]

Ooze does not mean "to flow gently" nor to "flow" at all. A stream that flows gently does not ooze. To *ooze* is to *issue* slowly and imperceptibly. The idea of issuing is essential.

Organ-pipe. Under this word we find another example of those amazing evidences of incapacity of poetical apprehension in a critic of Shakespeare's language which have been before remarked upon. In "The Tempest" (Act III. Sc. 3), Alonzo says: —

> O, it is monstrous, monstrous!
> Methought the billows spoke and told me of it;
> The winds did sing it to me: and the thunder,
> That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc'd
> The name of Prosper.

Upon this our critic gravely remarks (the italic emphasis is mine), "apparently not the pipe of a musical organ, which would have been *unable to pronounce a name*"!

Placket, "probably a stomacher (according to some, a petticoat, or the opening in it)." Thus the Lexicon. What-

[1] See the Note on Walker's *Critical Examination*, p. 368.

ever the uncertainty about this feminine article, of all things ever worn by woman, except a shoe and a bonnet, a stomacher was the one which could not have been called a placket. That any one at all should say that the opening in the petticoat is the placket would be almost equally strange, did we not know with what absolute want of discriminating thought language is used by many persons. For the hole or slit in the petticoat is called by all women of English blood, in whatever part of the world, and has, time out of mind, been called, the "placket-hole." Every girl knows that name, and every man who has been among women familiarly. But to say that the placket-hole is the placket is like saying that a ship's man-hole is a man, or that a rat-hole is a rat. A rat-hole is a hole for a rat; and the question as to the placket-hole is: What is the placket that the hole is or was for? There has been much uncertainty and discussion upon this point, which is of some interest because of the variety and unlikeness of the allusions to the placket in our earlier literature. I am able now to show clearly what the placket was, to explain the allusions to it, and give the history of this queer little word. A placket was originally a pocket. The name is derived from *plack*, which in the north of England meant a small piece of money. It is to be found in the Waverley novels, in the connection "plack or bawbee." This word is probably a form of *plate* = a thin piece of metal: the *t* sound having passed into *k*, according to a well-known phonetic "law." Now of old a pocket was not a pouch attached to an article of dress, and within it, but an article by itself, a small bag, or large purse, which was tied about the waist, or suspended from the shoulder. It was often of old worn outside the outer garment; a fashion which has lately been adopted by finely-dressed women. The placket, however, was worn not only inside the dress (for safety's sake in the days of cut-purses), but as remotely withinside as possible. In fact it was tied about the waist, immediately over the smock or chemise, and, hanging down in front of the wearer's person, was reached by her through a hole in her

outer garment, which was therefore called the placket-hole. Pockets like this (no longer called plackets, however) were in use so late as 1835. They were made of strong muslin, and were tied with broad tape about the waist, but at that time not next the chemise, but between the upper petticoat and the outer skirt, that of the gown. I remember having seen such pockets in New England and New York in my boyhood, and there must be many other persons who can also remember them. It is also much to the purpose that I have been told by elderly ladies that, in their girlhood, the placket-hole was made sometimes in the side of the skirt, although it is now generally at the back, so that mantua-makers would ask whether the placket-hole was to be made at the side or behind. This seems to be the survival of an old fashion in vogue when there was no side-pocket, with its pocket-hole, in the skirt of the gown, which is a very modern invention.

Swift, writing so late as 1727, has the following passage in which a pocket, or placket, of the old fashion is referred to, with his usual vividness and lack of reserve. A waiting-maid is describing her perplexity consequent upon the loss of some money.

Now you must know that my trunk has a very bad lock,
Therefore all the money I have, which God knows is a very small stock,
I keep in my pocket, tied about my middle, next my smock.
So when I went to put up my purse, as God would have it, my smock was unript,
And without putting it into my pocket, down it slipt.
Then the bell rung, and I went to put my lady to bed.
And God knows I thought my money was as safe as my maidenhead.

Mrs. Harris's Petition. Miscellanies, ed. 1742, Vol. IV. p. 67.

Here we have a contemporary record of this use of the pocket, or placket, one hundred and fifty-seven years ago, with a description of its intimate closeness to the wearer's body, and a Swift-like hint as to its position. From this position its name came very early, in loose times and among loose talkers, to have a meaning which may hereafter be rather illustrated than told. That its proper meaning was

a pouch, or pocket, hanging below the waist and close to the body, is evident from the following passages, in some of which, however, there is a double allusion, which confirms both the meanings just suggested.

Ralph. . . . And he shall make thee either a silken purse full of gold, or else a fine wrought smock.

Edw. But how shall I have the maid ?

Ralph. Marry, sirrah, if thou be'st a silken purse full of gold, then on Sundays she'll hang thee by her side, and you must not say a word. Now, sir, when she comes into a great prease of people, on a sudden she'll swap thee into her *plackerd;* then, sirrah, being there, you may plead for yourself.

Greene, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, p. 149, ed. Dyce.

Cath. Marry, come out, you're so busy about my petticoat you'll creep up to my *placket*, and [1] ye could but attain the honour ; but and the outsides offend your rogueships, look o' the lining : 't is silk.

Duke. Is 't silk 't is lined with, then ?

Cath. Silk ? Ay, silk, master slave ; etc.

Idem, The Honest Whore, Part II. p. 241, ed. Dyce.

Within this church an image was erected
Which did the Lady Fortune represent.
. . . . . .
Within her lap whole bundles did there lie
Of earthly blessings and terrestriall joyes.
. . . . . .
Then all the blessings which her *placket* fill'd
She seem'd to shake, and on his head distill'd.

Breton's Pasquil's Night Cap (1612) : in Poems on State Affairs, Vol. I. Part II. p. 185.

It was inevitable, however, that the name of such a secretly worn article of female attire should come, in early days, when words were used more loosely than they are now, to have a wider meaning among careless speakers; and as a *petticoat* is sometimes used for *woman*, and a woman is sometimes called a petticoat, so a petticoat came to be called a placket, and *placket* to be used for *woman*. This use is illustrated by the following passages, which exhibit the word used to mean a petticoat, and also in what may be called a stage of transition.

Is there no manners left among maids ? will they wear their *plackets* where they should bear their faces ?

The Winter's Tale, Act IV. Sc. 3.

[1] and = an = if.

For that, methinks, is the curse dependant on those that war for a placket. Troilus and Cressida, Act II. Sc. 3.

She cuckolded her husband with the serpent and then pretended to modesty, and fell a making *plackets* presently.

Crowne's Sir Courtly Nice, *apud* Dyce.

The message with hearts full of faith were receiv'd,
And the next news we heard was Q.[een] M.[ary] conceiv'd.
. . . . . .
Pray heaven to strengthen her Majesty's *placket*,
For if this trick fail, beware of your jacket.

The Miracle ; a Whig lampoon on James II.'s Queen : in Poems on State Affairs, Vol. I. Part II. p. 135.

Grew so in love with the wenches' song that he would not stir his pettitoes till he had both the tune and words ; which so drew the rest of the herd to me that all their senses stuck in ears : you might have pinch'd a *placket* it was senseless ; it was nothing to geld a cod-piece of a purse.

The Winter's Tale, Act IV. Sc. 4.

And first degrade us
Of all our ancient chambering ; next that
The symbols of our secresy, silk stockings
Hew off our heels ; our petticoats of arms
Tear off our bodies, and our bodkins break
Over our coward heads.
Coun. And ever after,
To make the tainture most notorious,
At all our crests,[1] *videlicet*, our *plackets*,
Let laces hang, and we return again
Unto our former titles, dairy-maids !

Beau. & Fl., The Woman's Prize, Act II. Sc. 4.

Her black saveguard is turn'd into a deep-slop, the holes of her upper body to button-holes, her waistcoat to a doublet, her *placket* to the ancient seat of a cod-piece, etc.

Middleton, The Roaring Girl, Act III. Sc. 3.

Here they did glance, and there they did gloist,
Here they did simper, and there they did slaver,
Here was a hand and there was a *placket*,
Whilst, hey ! their sleeves went flicket-a-flacket.

Pills to Purge Melancholy, Vol. II. p. 20.

Come listen a while (tho' the weather be cold
In your pockets and *plackets* your hands you may hold)

Idem, Vol. III. p. 4.

And so he fell a plundering
The *placket*-geer like light and thundering.

Wits' Paraphrase, p. 14.

[1] The petticoat being the sign, token, or crest of woman.

Tho' I perhaps had spar'd thy jacket,
I should have riv'd the witch's [1] *placket*.
Idem, Hypsipile to Jason, p. 111.

The abbess of Quedlingberg who, with the four great dignitaries of her chapter, the prioress, the deaness, the sub-chantress and senior canoness, had that week come to Strasburg to consult the university upon a case of conscience, relating to their *placket*-holes.
Sterne, Tristram Shandy, Chap. 86.

Was that brave heart meant to pant for a *placket*? [2]
Beau. & Fl., The Humorous Lieutenant, Act IV. Sc. 3.

Geo. . . . but if you 'd have a petticoat for your lady, here 's a stuff.
Frank Jun. Are you another tailor, sirrah? here 's a knave! What are you?
Geo. You are such another gentleman! but for the stuff, sir, 't is L. SS. & K., for the turn stript a purpose: a yard and a quarter broad, too, which is just the depth of a woman's petticoat. . . . Then it is likewise stript standing, between which is discovered the open part, which is now called the *placket*.[3]
Frank Jun. Why, was it ever called otherwise?
Geo. Yes, while the word remained pure in his original, the Latin tongue, who have no K's, it was called the *placet; a placendo*, a thing or place to please.
Middleton, Any Thing for a Quiet Life, Act II. Sc. 2.

Already we have approached the last sense which the word came to have, and which caused it to be used by playwrights and verse writers with a jocose and indecorous purpose, which the commentators and glossarists have either failed to see, or weakly sought to hide, and of which the following passages and references will furnish examples.

And in another place he saith that when souldiers entered any town, the first thing they sought for was the Curate's (or Parson's) Lemman. And they might have done well (as farre as we may gather by his wordes) to have given warning from one end of the towne to the other: "Looke to your *plackard* Madam (or Mistris) for fear of these Prelates."
World of Wonders (1607), p. 44.

To speak in plaine termes, there was in this Age, within the reach of our memory, a president of the high court of Parliament at Paris, who did extend his right so farre as to request an honourable Ladie to lend him her *placket*-piece; promising on that condition to give her an audience.
Idem, p. 132.

[1] Medea. [2] *I. e.* of course, the woman's.
[3] In the dress of the time for women the gown was drawn or "*stript*" aside, showing a rich petticoat.

And "King Lear," Act III. Sc. 4, line 90; "Love's Labour 's Lost," Act III. Sc. 1, line 166; the Clown's speech in Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus," Act I. Sc. 4; Beaumont and Fletcher's "Little French Lawyer," Act V. Sc. 2; *Idem*, "The Lover's Progress," Act IV. Sc. 3; Rabelais, liv. iii. chap. 20 (Urquhart translates *braquette* "cod-piece," and *pistolandier* "*placket*-racket"); *Idem*, liv. ii. chap. 5 (Urquhart translates *braquette* "cod-*placket*"); "Pills to Purge Melancholy," vol. ii. p. 19; *Idem*, vol. iv. p. 27, and p. 324; "Wit's Paraphrase," p. 14, and p. 27.

Others might be adduced; but these are surely enough (if not too much) to show the original and the various meanings and the history of this word, as to which so much of an unsatisfactory nature has been written, although it was used daily in familiar conversation and composition by women of English blood all over the world. I add only one example, of which I confess I can make nothing in accordance with what has gone before.

> Graunt, Jove, a *placket* graunt, where by the Gods uphold I may.
> Seneca's Ten Tragedies (1581), fol. 189 *b*.

This occurs in "Hercules Œteus," and I find that it is a translation of the line —

> Da, da, tuendos Jupiter, saltem Deos.

Here *placket* and *uphold* are used to render in English the idea conveyed in *tuendos* and *saltem*. But what was a placket that would uphold, or even hold safe, the gods? It will be observed that this is perhaps the earliest use of the word that I have met with; earlier probably than Greene's.

Kersey, whose dictionary (1702, 3d ed. 1721) preceded Bailey's, and whose definition of the word is the earliest that I have discovered, says that a placket is "the fore part of a woman's petticoat or shift;" an incorrect definition, which is probably due to the position which, as we have seen, the placket occupied. But he adds that it is "also a piece of Armour that covers the Breast-plate." A piece of armor covering the breast-plate would, I think, puzzle Grose, or Meyrick. Here, however, we have a definition which does

something to explain the use of the word in the translation of Seneca, and possibly something, too, to account for its having been mistaken for a woman's stomacher. And here, too, it is in place to remark upon Steevens's American note on "King Lear," which, like most of his work in that kind, is a queer mixture of truth and error. He quotes a part of Florio's definition of *torace:* "also a placket or stomacher, a brest-plate or corselet for the body." Steevens adds, "The word seems to be used in the same sense [a stomacher] in 'The Wandering Whores,' etc., a comedy, 1668, 'If I meet a cull in Moorefields, I can give him leave to dive in my placket.'" As to this passage, not only does the word "dive" show that it could not refer to a stomacher, which was a stiff outer ornamented garment for the chest, but such a reference was impossible, because in 1668 stomachers were no longer worn. Florio's definition is plainly untrustworthy. A placket, as we have seen by the passages quoted above, was something which was below the waist (a stomacher was above it), which might be lined with silk, and into which a purse hanging outside the gown might be slipped or swapped, for greater security (see the passage above from Greene's "Friar Bacon, etc."), thus bringing the purse into very close and intimate contact with the wearer's person. *Stomacher* is impossible, absurd. How, though, came it about that Florio should use *placket* and *stomacher* as synonymous, and add "a brest-plate, or corselet for the body?" Put *breast-plate* or *stomacher* in any one of the passages quoted above, and see that it is impossible that the writer could have been thinking of such a thing. Yet see the passage in the translated Seneca, and the strange second definition in Kersey, "a piece of armor that covers the breast-plate." The error, I believe, is to be ascribed to the easy confusion of *placket* with *plaque*, which was of old applied, and is to this day applied, to thin pieces of metal-work, such as were attached both to breast-plates and to stomachers by way of ornament. Hence, at a time when language was loosely used, *plaque* might be taken by some

persons to mean a corselet or a stomacher;[1] and then the confusion with *placket*, another article of female apparel, the name of which was used very inaccurately, as we have seen was easy and almost inevitable.

This word furnishes us with one of the many examples of the way in which glossarists and annotators misquote each other on the one hand, and on the other adopt a definition or an etymology without question. Nares (1784) having added to his very imperfect and misleading definition of the word ("a petticoat") that "Bailey says it was the fore-part of the shift or petticoat," this definition has been adopted by some, and Bailey given as authority with Nares. But Bailey says no such thing: he says it is "the open part of a woman's petticoat;" an impossible definition: a placket could not mean an aperture; he and the speaker in Middleton's "Anything for a Quiet Life," cited above, had "placket-hole" in mind. What the placket was for which the hole was made and used, I hope there will no longer be any doubt. The subject is one which it is difficult to treat with gravity and decorum; and if any one is disposed to join Birone, and style the writer of this little *excursus* upon the word "dread prince of plackets," he may do so: only let it be remembered that the jest is mine.

Finally, it is to be said that thirty years and more ago Mr. Halliwell-Phillips, with the accuracy and the thoroughness of research which distinguish him among antiquarians and commentators on Shakespeare, gave in his invaluable "Archaic and Provincial Dictionary," briefly, but completely, the correct definition of this word, both in its proper and its perverted use; a definition which ought to have prevented all the subsequent confusion and misapprehension upon the subject, and which I can only hope to have confirmed in giving this account of the word's etymology and history.

[1] Cotgrave (1611). "*Plaques*. Flat pieces of goldsmith's work, resembling little flowers," etc. Now, we know that such little flower-like pieces of goldsmith's work were common on both stomachers and corselets.

Parcel-bawd, parcel-gilt, "words used," we are told, "by Elbow and Mrs. Quickly, and explained by the commentators as meaning half-bawd, half-gilt, but not hyphened in old editions, and probably intended to have another sense: nearly = species." Quite wrong, as everybody knows. Even at this day a silver goblet gilt inside is said to be parcel-gilt.

Pregnant. In Hamlet's well-known phrase, "crook the pregnant hinges of the knee," every intelligent English reader knows intuitively that *pregnant* means "fruitful, bearing benefits." But Dr. Schmidt says it means "disposed, prompt, ready;" an astonishing misapprehension, even in a German, for the next line is, "That thrift may follow fawning."

Remember thy courtesy. On this phrase Dyce in his glossary says nothing, having accepted it (after some previous discussion) as meaning merely "put on your hat;" and this explanation is given in the Shakespeare Lexicon. But it is quite possible (I am far from saying it is certain) that the speaker in this case (Armado, "Love's Labour's Lost," Act V. Sc. 1), and in some others, does ask the person whom he addresses to put on his hat, and yet that "remember thy courtesy" does not *mean* "put on your hat." The phrase is one which I have found very perplexing, and, after no little consideration of it, I am even now far from certain as to its meaning. In the passage in question it is generally supposed (as I once supposed it) to be addressed to one of the persons present. Not so. Armado is expatiating to Holofernes upon the King's familiar condescension to him, and tells him that, "among other important and most serious designs, and of great import indeed too," his majesty will say to him (Armado), "I do beseech thee remember thy courtesy; I beseech thee apparel thy head." Holofernes had been much too long in conference with Armado to have this compliment paid to him then, and, moreover, a brief consideration of the whole speech will show that the Spaniard is describing the King's conduct to him. The passage

which seems to have determined Mr. Dyce's judgment is the following, from Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour:" —

Knowell [to a servant bringing a letter]. To me, sir? What do you mean? Pray you, remember your courtesy. [Reads.] "To his most selected friend Edward Knowell." What might the gentleman's name be, sir, that sent it? Nay, pray you, be covered.

Here, plainly, as in the former case, the speaker tells the person spoken to to put on his hat. But does it follow therefore that "remember thy courtesy" means "put on your hat?" I think not. This is certain, — that it cannot have that purport without absolute reversal of the meaning both of *remember* and *courtesy*, which had the same meaning in Shakespeare's time that they have now. Moreover, at that time, no less than now, courtesy required the removal of the hat, the doffing of the cap. It were needless to quote passages in support of this; but here is one very much to the purpose from Florio's "Second Fruites," 1591: —

Let us make a lawe that no man put off his hat or cap, etc. . . . This is a kind of courtesy or ceremony rather to be avoided.

Folio 55.

Doffing hat or cap was indeed so much a part of a salute as making a leg. No well-behaved person, of whatever rank or condition, forgot it. And that to remember courtesy was not to forget the proprieties of salutation is shown (were that necessary) by this passage from "Sir Amadas" —

Thoffe[1] Sir Amadas wer in morning broght,
His curtasy forgat he noght,
Bot salud him full right.

Line 407.

To assume, therefore, that "to remember one's courtesy" *meant* "to put on one's hat" is to set aside custom wholly, both as to language and as to conduct. Moreover, the passages in question — those in "Love's Labour 's Lost," and in "Every Man in his Humour" (and all others I believe that have been cited) — exhibit the phrase as used by a superior to an inferior, and therefore as implying an excuse of

[1] Though.

ceremony. But here is one in which it is used by an inferior to a superior, and in which, besides, it can have nothing to do with taking off or putting on the hat. In Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus," a carter is talking with Faustus about a trick played upon a horse-courser who was made to believe that he pulled the doctor's leg off; and this is said: —

Carter. And do you remember nothing of your leg?
Faust. No, in good sooth.
Car. Then I *pray you, remember your courtesy.*
Faust. I thank you, sir.
Car. 'T is not so much worth.

Faustus, Act V. Sc. 1.

Here the phrase used by the inferior to one greatly his superior is just that used by Knowell to the servant, and by the King to Armado, and there is no question of hats or bows. The point is a difficult one; but as *remember* could not mean "neglect, forget, or leave off," and courtesy required the taking off the hat, and as the phrase might be used by an inferior to a superior, it seems clear that "remember thy courtesy," although it may have had some connection with the waiving of ceremony, could not have *meant* "put on your hat."

Runaway. Of all the many inacceptable and needless explanations of this word (of which I myself once furnished one), Dr. Schmidt adopts that which is the most unacceptable, one presenting an idea which it is quite impossible that Shakespeare should have had in mind: "people who ramble about the streets at night, to spy out the doings of others." The inconsistency of this meaning with the context is manifest at a glance. These people (to whom it would be absurd to apply the term *run-away*) ramble about the streets at night, they need night for their occupation; and *therefore*, we are asked to believe, Juliet prays for *night to come:* and prays for it "that runaway's eyes may wink," *i. e.* because the darkness which is the necessary condition of their eavesdropping, and which *they* desire, will surely cause them *to go to sleep*. Moreover, Juliet cared for, thought of, no one who might be in the streets. She

knew well enough that she was secure against all such spying. The Capulet mansion was no street-side house, to be pryed into by any passer-by. Juliet's window, her balcony, her loggia, were separated from all that by a garden and a wall; at Romeo's passing of which Shakespeare makes her wonder. This explanation given in the Lexicon is the most futile of all which have been elicited by this passage. Juliet's runaway is merely the sun.

> The all-seeing sun that makes chaste virgins blush.

See the notes on this passage in the "Riverside" Shakespeare, and in my first edition.

Seal. Troilus, delivering Cressida to Diomed, earnestly begs him to "entreat her fair." Diomed, leaving his request unnoticed, turns to Cressida, and with high compliments to her charms, tells her that she may "command him wholly." Whereupon Troilus says, —

> Grecian, thou dost not use me courteously,
> To shame the zeal of my petition to thee,
> In praising her.
>
> Act IV. Sc. 4.

For *zeal* the old copies have the very easy misprint *seal;* and this Dr. Schmidt retains, explaining, or thinking that he explains, "to shame the seal of my petition," by the gloss, "to disgrace the grant of my request." But not content with this, he adds, "most modern editors, preposterously, *zeal*." Yet every English editor of any note or weight, from Theobald in 1733 to Rolfe in 1883, and the very Cambridge editors, who reject no reading that is not nonsense, and admit none which may be questioned, even on the ground that another is as good, accept *zeal*. Indeed to be capable of understanding Shakespeare is to see that *zeal* was his word. Troilus expostulates with Diomed because he discourteously disregards the zeal, the earnestness of his solicitation, and craftily sets it aside by a compliment to Cressida.

Shent. Upon the reading in "Troilus and Cressida," Act II. Sc. 3, "he *shent* our messengers," for "he *sent* our messengers" of the folio, Dr. Schmidt remarks, "some

modern editors *shent;* but there is no authorized instance of the imperfect." Suppose there is n't; what of it? If Shakespeare needed a word but once, he would use it but once. And what does Dr. Schmidt mean by "authorized instance"? Spenser, Dryden, and Shenstone use "the imperfect." They are "authority" enough, one would think. As to Shakespeare himself, he would have used the preter-plu-perfect of anything without fear of any or pity for all the grammarians in Christendom, if he had need, a hundred times or once, and he thought his audience would understand him; and then he would have forgotten all about it, like a man of common sense as he was. Dr. Schmidt's "some modern editors" again includes every English editor of any importance from Theobald to Rolfe. The Cambridge edition does not even remark upon the misprint.

Skin between the brows. Dogberry says that Goodman Verges is "as honest as the skin between his brows." Upon this remarkable comparison I have seen not one note of explanation; nor does Dyce's Glossary or the Shakespeare Lexicon, both of which give glosses for words and phrases which need it no more than "bread and butter" does. It is assumed as Shakespeare's phrase; but it is not so. It is a mere folk phrase of indefinable antiquity, like many credited to him. Here are two examples of its use nearly two centuries apart: —

> I am as true, I wold thou knew, as skin between thy brows.
> Gammer Gurton's Needle (1566).

> Virtuous! Ah, I warrant she 's as virtuous as
> The skin between her brows.
> Durfey's Don Quixote (1729), p. 222.

But here is a passage, in time between these two, in which the phrase seems to be taken, if not as offensive, as incomprehensible by a Dogberry: —

> *Ord.* I am as honest as the skin that is
> Between thy brows.
> *Con.* What skin between my brows?
> What skin, thou knave? I am a Christian
> And what is more, a constable. What skin?
> Cartwright, The Ordinary (1651), p. 83.

Sickle. Dr. Schmidt refuses to recognize *shekel*, and reads, "not with fond *sickles* of the tested gold," with the remark (this time without epithet of opprobrium) that "modern editors read *shekels*." And so I am sure would Dr. Schmidt have read, had he known that *sickle* is a mere irregular phonetic form of *shekel*, because of the pronunciation of *s* before a vowel as *sh*. It had that sound also even after a consonant *t* ; for we have in the folio of 1623 : —

> *Swits* and spurs
> *Swits* and spurs, or Ile crie a match,

for "switch and spurs," etc. The name of Solomon's Ethiopian queen was written both Sheba and Saba, as in the Septuagint, but always aspirated.

Sincere elicits the most characteristic remark that it is "*sincére* behind the substantive, and *síncere* before it." Now that Shakespeare would accent *sincere* according to his needs and his opportunities is true enough. The unreceivable part of this opinion is that which alone makes it pertinent, — the ticketing *sincere* according to its relative position. Shakespeare made no such distinction. He used the word but four times : altogether too small a number of examples to form a generalized opinion upon. Of these, only two deviate, or seem to deviate, from the usual pronunciation, one in "Henry VIII.," his last play, a play so shiftless, confused, and headlong in its versification, that nothing on such a point can be reasonably inferred from it; the other is the following in "King Lear," Act II. Sc. 2 : —

> *Kent.* Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,
> Under the allowance of your great aspect,
> Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
> On flick'ring Phœbus' front —
> *Corn.* What mean'st by this ?
> *Kent.* To go out of my dialect, etc.

Who that knows Shakespeare's ways does not see that in this passage sin*cere* has its usual accent!

Spit. Here we have again "fall to it with fresh courage" as the gloss of "spit in the hole" (Taming of the Shrew, Act III. Sc. 1), one of the Lexicon's amusing blunders.

On Falstaff's "I would I might never spit white again" (2 Henry IV., Act I. Sc. 2), there is this monitory comment: "Nares adduces some passages from contemporary writers to prove that to spit white was thought to be the consequence of intemperance in drinking; but he has forgotten to ascertain the color of other people's spittle." Dr. Schmidt, it appears, does not know that simple saliva is clear and glairy, like the white of an egg. It is only when it becomes frothy that it is white. Moreover Nares, and Dyce who follows him, are not quite right. When a man is very thirsty, and his throat is dry, his saliva becomes reduced in quantity, and white, frothy. This was noted. See for example the following passage from Urquhart's "Rabelais," Book II. Chap. 2: "For every man found himself so altered and a-dry with drinking these flat wines that they did nothing but spit, and that as white as Maltha cotton, saying, We have of the Pantagruel, and our throats are salted." Falstaff prizes the thirst that enables him to swallow sack, and says, "If it be but a hot day, and I brandish anything but a bottle, I would I might never spit white again:" that is, never be thirsty again. And there is the old story, of a wine lover on a hot day saying, "I 've a thirst that I would n't take a hundred dollars for."

Step-mother. "a mother by marriage only." An insufficient and misleading gloss. A mother-in-law is also a mother by marriage only. A step-mother is a father's second (or other-numbered) wife.

Study. The Friar says, in "Much Ado About Nothing," of the supposed dead Hero and her repentant lover, —

> The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
> Into his study of imagination; —
>
> Act IV. Sc. 1.

meaning, it is needless to say, his imaginative study, his imaginative musings. But Dr. Schmidt tells us that here *study* is used figuratively for "an apartment appropriated to literary employment," into which the idea of Hero creeps slowly! — a notion upon which it is needless to waste a word.

The is made the occasion of deploying much frivolous grammatical pedantry, to which no particular reference is necessary. But what shall we say of the grammarian who, writing of English, says that passages like the following contain "differences from modern or common usage?" — "the one so like the other;" "for urging it the second time to me;" "knock 'em down by the dozens;" and so forth! Every English-speaking person, literate and illiterate, nowadays uses *the* in just that way, and in such connection. Without the article, such phrases would not be English, would not be intelligible.

Tidy, the Lexicon tells us, is "used in a scarcely ascertainable (and at any rate improper) sense by Doll Tear-Sheet in addressing Falstaff" when she calls him a "little tidy Bartholomew boar-pig." On the contrary, the meaning does not need to be ascertained and the use of the word is quite proper. *Tidy* simply means "in good condition," and so, "attractive." It is used now in England in a complimentary way, just as Mistress Doll uses it. But it is not high class speech.

Toward. Soon after the publication of the second volume of the Shakespeare Lexicon, an article was sent to me which I laid in the Lexicon and forgot until I found it as I turned the leaves at the present examination of the work.[1] It opened thus: —

PHILOLOGICAL AND CRITICAL NONSENSE. — A learned German, Dr. Alexander Schmidt, has published a dictionary of all the English words, phrases, and constructions in the works of Shakespeare. Among other words, he treats of the words *toward*, and *towards*, in separate articles, just as if Shakespeare was responsible for the difference in spelling. Dr. Schmidt cites instances of the use of both forms, and finds them nearly equal. Before a consonant, vowel, etc., aspirate, the instances cited of *toward* are all but exactly numerous as those of *towards*, but before a semi-vowel, *towards* occurs in the rate of four to one. On the strength of a single quotation, Dr. Schmidt allows one more meaning to *towards* than to *toward*, viz., *about*, in the passage from "Richard III.," "*towards* three or four o'clock."

[1] It came to me in a blank envelope, like many of its kind; and I do not know to what journal to credit it.

Now all this is utter nonsense. It is etymology run mad. Shakespeare had nothing to do with the spelling of the words in his works. He is not known to have supervised the publication of a single play, or any collection of his plays. Nor is any edition of his works authority for the spelling of any word in his time, or at any time, for the proof-reading of the first edition and of all subsequent editions has been careless. The proof-reading of all our publications is careless, and the spelling of words in any book, even in most dictionaries, is not proof that it is right, even in the eyes of the author.[1] If Noah Webster could rise from the dead to revise the "unabridged" he would indignantly throw it into the fire.

Every English scholar knows that the spelling of the language in Shakespeare's time was unsettled, and that no book published prior to the first edition of Johnson's dictionary, about 1785, can be quoted as authority. And every English scholar will confess that Dr. Johnson's first edition can no longer be used as authority for present spelling.

Ward is very common in many compound words. We have upward, downward, inward, onward, toward, afterward, hitherward, thitherward, earthward, heavenward, backward, forward, and many more. The meaning of the termination "ward" is motion, or direction, to some place.

The final "s" appended to this class of words is not authorized by analogy, or by grammatical construction. The words are all used as prepositions, adjectives, and adverbs, and cannot have a plural form. We speak of an untoward accident, of a forward child, and a forward march, of a downward flow, and an upward flight; and who would put a final "s" to these adjectives? Is there any rule founded on analogy for adding an "s" to a word in order to make it a preposition, or an adverb? Why then should *toward* and *afterward* have the sibilant hiss, already too frequent in the language?

This critic seems to me, I need hardly say, quite right in his view of the superfluity of the distinction upon which he comments. But the difference between *toward* and *towards*, *afterward* and *afterwards*, although it is one which we may be sure Shakespeare cared nothing about, and knew nothing about, is not in fact, one of mere spelling. In *towards*, etc., the *s* is the consequence of the addition of the adverbial *es*, at first the sign of the possessive case. It is needless, and worse than needless, and does not in usage at all affect the meaning of the word. But still, as the difference was originally etymological, and not one of mere spelling, Dr. Schmidt, according to the plan of his work, did only what was proper in recording it. I observe, however, an essen-

[1] This is true in yet another sense. It should be known that writers are not permitted to spell in public as they please, but are compelled to conform to the standard of the printing-office; which is almost universally Webster.

tial perversion of its meaning in one of his sections; in which it is said that it is "equivalent to *to*" in such cases as the following: "a reverend man . . . towards this afflicted fancy drew;" "the king is now in progress towards Saint Alban's;" "he comes towards London;" "towards London they do bend their course;" "gallop apace . . . towards Phoebus' lodging." This is like the vulgar confusion of *in* with *into*. In all these cases *toward* means merely "in the direction of," implying only motion thitherward. An army may march *toward* London, and yet not march *to* London, which happened in some of these cases. This distinction is essential. That between *toward* and *towards* is quite superfluous and futile; and we may be sure that Shakespeare used the two forms indiscriminately and thoughtlessly; and indeed whether we have the words as he wrote them, in either case, is equally uncertain and unimportant.

Varlet. I cannot, *causa pudoris*, even in this purely glossarial paper, remark particularly upon what is said in the Lexicon in regard to this word in "Troilus and Cressida," Act V. Sc. 1. But I commend it to the attention of students as one of the most amazing exhibitions in critical literature of overstrained effort at subtlety. The careless phonetic spelling of the folio, *varlot*, is retained, and is called "a kind of hermaphroditical form" connected with *harlot*.

Viol. "a sort of violin." On the contrary it was not a sort of violin; and a viol-player in Shakespeare's time would have scorned to play a violin. Then, the violin was used only by jesters and jongleurs and street musicians. The viol was made with frets, was of a different size and shape, and was strung in a very different way from the violin. It was the instrument of professional musicians and of gentle-folk. It was not until the time of Charles II. that the violin came into reputable use. Nor was the viol-de-gamboys "a violoncello." Then the violoncello (a small violone) was unknown.

Well-a-near, in "the lady shrieks and well-a-near does fall in travail with her fear" (Pericles, Act III. Prol.), is glossed as "well-a-day, alas." Not so, at all, as no one need be told. It is not an exclamation; but means merely "very nearly."

Where, we are told, is "used by Shakespeare after verbs of seeming when *there* would be expected," as in these passages and others like them: "behold where Madam Mitigation comes;" "look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs;" "look where the sturdy rebel sits," etc. In such constructions *there* might be expected by a German, but by no one of English blood and speech. In these cases, it will be seen at a glance that, according to English idiom, *there* would make them almost nonsense.

Wince or *Winch*, "the first form preferred by modern editors; the latter better authorized by the old editions." Dr. Schmidt is then unaware that *winch* is a mere irregular phonetic spelling of *wince*, owing to the tendency of the *s* sound with careless speakers to assume an aspirate.

Here I stop, with half the eight page signatures of my copy of the Shakespeare Lexicon uncut. We however have seen enough. I venture to say, to satisfy any intelligent reader that this work is not to be trusted, except upon points of grammar, and not always upon these. The task which I have hastily — and I fear very superficially — performed is one which I was not ready to undertake, and is one of a sort that I have never undertaken unless driven to it by a sort of necessity, and in defence both of myself and of views which seemed to be of some importance. The examination of the Lexicon into which I have in this manner been led, although it has necessarily been so imperfect, has put it, before me at least, in a light far less favorable than that in which I looked upon it at first. It is a very scientific, very systematic, very elaborate performance; and like many scientific, systematic, elaborate performances, utterly worthless because misleading. This with great respect for Dr. Schmidt's erudition and industry.

He is doubtless a well-equipped scholar, and a very thorough grammarian; but he seems plainly incompetent to deal with the language of Shakespeare; and his extravagance and his tendency to overstrained subtlety on the one hand and to a blind submission to old authority on the other lead me to suspect that he is the philologer referred to by Max Muller when he speaks (Science of Language, Vol. I. p. 442) with ironical wonder of the derivation of language "from one root, a feat actually accomplished by a Dr. Schmidt."

I am sure that any approval of this Lexicon which may have been expressed by a competent person has come from some one who has examined it, if at all, only in the slightest manner, and who was impressed by its imposing form, its minuteness, and its systematic arrangement. The book plainly needs to be examined, article by article, by some competent English scholar of average common sense, and an appreciation of it set forth, before it becomes, by reason of the external qualities just enumerated, an "authority." Upon my casual examination, I venture merely the opinion that its erudite compiler lacks certainly one qualification for his task, — an inbred understanding of the English of nowadays and of Shakespeare's time; that so far is he from being "accurate" that not only in words and phrases which are the proper subjects of explanation, but even as to those which need none to any average reader, he has made many mistakes; and that as to the rest, his work is so far from being "invaluable" that it is utterly needless even to the least learned of my intelligent readers, — a striking and characteristic exhibition and example of the superfluity of Shakespeareanism.

In two passages I remark with pleasure that Dr. Schmidt's Lexicon is distinguished by a sound adherence to the reading of the old copies, and a correct explanation — passages as to which I with others have erred in making needless changes. The first is in "Julius Cæsar," Act II. Sc. 1: —

For if thou path, thy native semblance on.

Here for *path* we have had *march*, *put*, *hadst*, *hath*, and *pass*. But *path* is right, meaning "walk past, go as along a path." So in Braithwaite's "Arcadian Princesse," 1637, Part II. p. 149: "Twice had I *path'd* my border walk when this Statue first presented it selfe unto mee."

The other passage is in Macbeth's "commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice to our own lips," as it has always been printed in modern editions. But the folio has "the *ingredience*," and so in Act IV. Sc. 1, "the *ingredience* of our cauldron." This is the right reading; and I had given it in the "Riverside" Shakespeare; but shrunk from it in the proof, not in doubt, but thinking it was not worth while to change the so long accepted text and provoke censure for such a trifle, and when, too, *ingredience* might be a misprint for *ingredients*. But the former, which Dr. Schmidt gives, is the right word. The idea is collective, not separative. So in "Othello," Act II. Sc. 3, "every inordinate cup is blessed, and the *ingredience* is a devil." The writer quoted just above shall illustrate and establish this point. "Madame, (quoth Metoxos) to relate *every particular ingredience* used by this divine artist [a physician] would so enlarge the extent of my discourse," etc. *Idem*, page 23.

Notwithstanding these two laudable preservations of the old text, and others which I may possibly have passed over unobserved, I venture to think that the erudite German Realschuldirector might well place himself in *statu pupillari* to some of those modern English editors at whose preposterousness and incompetence he has thought it so often becoming in him, with more daring than discretion, to scoff in terms which from time to time have spurred the sides of my flagging purpose.

NOTE

ON W. S. WALKER'S "CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE TEXT."

At the suggestion of a friend who read my remarks upon Walker's "Critical Examination," etc., on its first publication,[1] I give, with more particularity, yet very briefly, the reasons for my appreciation of it. That Mr. Walker was a scholar, a man of critical ability, of candor, and one who sincerely sought to benefit Shakespeare's text, no one who examines his work can doubt. The question is simply as to the value of that work, what it has done for the text, what it has suggested of any importance. For this is its limit. It is not analytical, æsthetical, or historical, nor even critical but in a verbal way. It has no literary quality as literature to be read, and it pretends to none.

Let us look from this point of view at the second volume, which is the most varied, contains the greatest number of sections and subjects, and is the best adapted to purposes of examination. Its sections are seventy-seven in number, from XLIV. to CXX. Of these some are valuable. For example, it is shown clearly in Section CIII. that *spring* was used in Shakespeare's time to mean "a shoot, a twig," and even, in the plural, to mean "a young wood." This is interesting and valuable, although it touches no passage in the plays or the sonnets, and but two in the poems. So in Section CXV. it is shown that *detest* in several passages expresses speech, not sentiment, and means "protest against, cry out upon." And again, we are told (Section CXI.) that *control* in Shakespeare's day had the sense of "controvert, control." Such fruits of study and reflection as these are contributions to our knowledge, and helpers to under-

[1] *The Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1884.

stand Shakespeare. But of all the seventy-seven sections in this volume, there are of this kind only six! Some may be well classed as of very doubtful value. Such, for example, as those upon the confounding of *e* and *er*, *fits* and *sits*, *or* and *for*, and the like: points which need no discussion for any intelligent and tolerably competent editor. These are ten in number. Then there are twelve which are absolutely and surprisingly wrong and bad: to some of which I shall refer more particularly. Thirty are not doubtful, but neither good nor bad: being absolutely worthless. For example, on the "derivation of certain proper names in Shakespeare." What matter whence they were derived? He took them as he found them. A "peculiar use of *vast*," in —

> No vast obscurity or misty vale.
> Titus Andron., Act V. Sc. 2.
>
> As that vast shore wash'd with the farthest sea.
> Romeo and Juliet, Act II. Sc. 2.

How peculiar? Shakespeare was a poet; but this is hardly even a poetical use of the word. "The abstract for the concrete:" surely: why not? how not? Then we have such fiddle-faddle as sections on "repetition of the preposition" and "predicates which properly indicate effect employed to express cause," and so forth. But this cant is dear to the grammatical heart. And we have a section on "*c* and *t* confounded," and another on "*art* and *act* confounded." Certainly in a huge book so carelessly written and so carelessly printed as the folio of 1623, such blunders and hundreds like them would be made, and were made: every sensible editor, and most sensible readers, without help, will see them, correct them, and make no fuss about it. Corrections of such errors as these need not even be mentioned by an editor, *unless they change a sense*, or unless he is making a critical variorum text, like that of the "Cambridge" Shakespeare, in which insignificant variation is recorded merely because it is variation. As I said before, there are thirty of the seventy-seven sections which are of this quality. Last, I mention nineteen sections in this volume,

the publication of which was superfluous, because three years before their publication the text had already been regulated or interpreted in the manner which they advocate, — to wit, in my edition of 1857. To me it is amusing to see these suggestions made, sometimes doubtfully, when the readings had been already taken into my text, or the explanations given in my notes, and adopted by after-coming editors silently, but sometimes with credit to "Walker's Critical Examination."

Of those sections which I have pronounced wholly wrong and bad, I shall exhibit and examine a very few characteristic specimens. Section L. is headed, "Creäture frequently pronounced as a trisyllable," and Section LI., "On *treasure* and *pleasure* as trisyllables." Now there seems to be reason for believing that these words had sometimes the quantity, as we may say, of trisyllables. But *pleasure* a trisyllable, pronounced *plé-ă-sure!* Mr. Walker, Mr. Walker! a word lately derived from the French *plaisir*, or rather that word adopted into English! Equally absurd are the supposed pronunciations, *tré-ă-sure*, and even *cré-ă-ture*, notwithstanding the trisyllabic form of the latter in French. These words were pronounced in Shakespeare's time, we may be sure, *plúse-iure* (first syllable like *place*) and *crúte-iure*. The *quasi* trisyllabic quantity with which they were sometimes used was admissible, because of a slight setting off of the *i* (or short *ee* sound in the last syllable, thus, — *plase-ĭ-ure*, *crate-ĭ-ure*. The word *creature* is now pronounced in this way by many Scotland-born and Ireland-born Englishmen, who merely preserve an old fashion of speech. The assumption that such pronunciations as *creäture* and *pleäsure* were possible shows into what vagaries a clever, scholarly man may be led. Walker actually has upon —

> She is a gallant creature, and complete
> In mind and feature —
>
> Henry VIII., Act III. Sc. 2.

the interrogative comment, "Query, *creäture* and *cómplete*." Yes, by all means, — but let us be consistent and have —

> She is a gallant *creäture*, and complete
> In mind and *feäture*.

The way in which Shakespeare pronounced these lines was this: —

> She *ees* a gallant *crate-iure*, and com*plate*
> *Een* mind and *fate-iure*.

Walker's Section LX. is on the "Confusion of *e* and *ie* final," of which the first example given, "And gives to *aire* nothing a local habitation," etc., is sufficiently characteristic. It should seem that this was too obvious and too trivial a matter for comment, and in a special section. If the text had not been silently rectified, or rather modernized, in this respect in hundreds, almost thousands of instances, either it would have puzzled the "average" modern reader, or the number of the textual notes would have been largely increased. There is, however, no confusion of *e* and *ie*, the variation being merely the result of irregular phonetic spelling, by which *e* was *written* for *y*.

One word, however, which has been much misrepresented because of a like phonetic variation, receives no attention. We find *happily* often in old books and in the modern editions of them, when it is quite out of place, and when the word intended is *happely*; a trisyllable meaning "by hap, perchance." This was shown (for the first time, I believe, but that is a trifling matter) in my edition of 1857, with a consequent regulation of the text. Upon this point, however, the Cambridge editors express doubt, retaining *happily*, to my surprise. Here is an instance very pregnant and decisive from Marlowe's "Jew of Malta." Selim Calymath, son of the Grand Signior, arrives at Malta, to demand ten years' tribute overdue. The governor asks leave to consult with his knights; whereupon Calymath says to his retinue, according to all editions, even the last: —

> Stand all aside, and let the knights determine;
> And send to keep the galleys under sail,
> For happily we shall not tarry here.
> Now governor [say] how are you resolved?

But here is no assertion; nor was the conjectural tarrying

to be happy or even fortunate, more or less. The sense is, For by hap, or perhaps [*i. e.* if the tribute is paid] we shall not tarry. Plainly we should read here, as in many corresponding passages of Shakespeare and contemporary writers, "For *happely*," etc.

. Section LXIX. is on the "pronunciation of *one*," as to which it is said that "*one* in Shakespeare's time was commonly pronounced *un* (a pronunciation not yet obsolete among the common folk), and sometimes apparently . . . *on*." Nine pages are then filled with examples and brief remarks which are supposed to be in point. These, however, with perhaps an exception or two, only show that *one* was *not* pronounced *wun ;* that is, that the *w* sound (*u* or *oo*) was not heard in it. This is undoubtedly true; and it had been shown in the notes to my edition of 1857. But it by no means follows that the pronunciation was either *un* or *on*. The pronunciation *un* among "the common folk" is merely an example of phonetic decay. It is a slovenly pronouncing of the modern *one* (*wun*).

One was generally pronounced in Shakespeare's time just as it is written, with the name sound of *o*, as in *bone*, *prone*, *lone*, etc. The point seems to be regarded as one of some interest; and I therefore quote here from the "Memorandums of English Pronunciation in the Elizabethan Era," in my edition of 1857–1862, the following passage, by which I think that pronunciation is established: —

"One" is a word the modern pronunciation of which is at variance with analogy, to which the best usage of Shakespeare's day seems to have conformed. Its modern pronunciation is a unique violation of a rule which is in force as to this very word in its compounds, "only," "alone," and "atonement," the unaccountable dropping of the *e* in the first of which has not even yet substituted its analogical pronunciation *on*-ly for its elementary *one*-ly. (See the Notes on "only," Vol. II. p. 184, and on "atone," Vol. IV. p. 384.) That the presumption justified by analogy and by these facts is sustained by the evidence of rhymes and of spelling no observant reader of our ancient authors need be told. Such rhymes as the following are numberless: *one* with "grone," "Seneca's Ten Tragedies," 1581, fol. 184 *b; once* with "stones," *Ib.* fol. 5 and fol. 21 *b;* with "bones," *Ib.* fol. 33, fol. 43 *b*, and fol. 209; *ones* with "bones," *Ib.* fol. 62 *b*, and with "zones," *Ib.* fol. 34 *b; every chone* with "alone," *Ib.*

fol. 111 ; *one* with "foen" (plural of "foe"), "Arcadia," 1605, p. 228 ; with "owne," *Ib.* p. 344 ; *one* with "known" and "mone," "Albion's England," 1605, p. 36 ; with "knowne," *Ib.* p. 324, with "throne," p. 283 ; with "loane," "Brown's Pastorals," Vol. I. p. 11 ; with "mone," "Romeus and Juliet," ed. Collier, p. 74 ; with "grone," "Honour's Academy," Pt. III. 1610, p. 94 ; *once* with "groanes," *Ib.* p. 123 ; *one* with "alone," Drayton's "Heroic Epis.," 1619, p. 189 ; with "throne" and "alone," Daniel's "Letters of Octavia," 1599, st. 14 ; with "throwne," "Pastor Fido," 1647, p. 28; and see "Robert the Devyll," *passim.* This word was even spelled *own.* See "Addition is the practicke to joyne divers somes in *owne*," "Interpreter of the Acadamie," 1648, p. 137 ; "its necessary for *owne* that undertak's the building," etc., *Ib.* p. 173. This supports the reading, "A hundred mark is a long ow'n," (2 Henry IV., Act II. Sc. 1); for in phonographic spelling if "one" could be spelled *own,* "own" of course could be spelled *one.*

To this evidence must be added that of Butler's Grammar, 1633, *passim.* Butler devoted one third of his work to orthoepy and spelling, and he was a rigid phonographist in practice as well as theory, writing *tung, dubble, non, reddi,* etc., with invariable uniformity. He invented characters to express the compound and inflected sounds of vowels, and also the consonants in combination with aspirates. The *e* of production or prolongation he indicates by an inverted comma (‘), writing "made" *mad‘*, "like" *lik‘*, "most" *most‘*, "ope" *op‘*, "use" *us‘*, and the like; and he (expressing, be it observed, the new and "civil" pronunciation. See the note on OO, p. 249) invariably writes *on‘* and *on‘ly*, as for instance, "C and G had each of them anciently *on‘ on‘ly* sound which was hard," p. 14. If the pronunciation of his day had been *wun* or *on,* he would have so written.

In support of examples like the foregoing is the evidence both positive and negative of Poole's "English Parnassus," 1657 (but written several years before), where in the "Alphabet of Monosyllables," which "treats of all rhimes imaginable in English . . . according to their several terminations," we find *one* set down to rhyme with "bone," "cone," "drone" "flown," "moan," "shone," "throne," etc., while it is omitted from the tables under *on* and *un.*

But countless as the examples indicative of the analogical pronunciation of this word are, I have noticed a few passages which show that it was also pronounced *wone* and *wun* in the Elizabethan period. These, however, are chiefly in homely ballads. See, for instance, "as *won* on no grounde," "Wyt & Science," Shak. Soc. Ed. p 31 ; "For darker there hath been many a *wone*," "Arise, Arise," *Ib.* p. 91 ; "Ye be welcome *won* by *wone*," "In Praise of a good Welcome," *Ib.* p. 111 ; "He telth each *wone*," "Against Slander," *Ib.* p. 114.

I think the origin of the universal modern pronunciation of the word may be traced to the tendency in some of the provincial dialects of England, that of Dorsetshire in particular, to introduce *w* before *o.* Thus "hot" was pronounced and spelled *whot*, and "old" *wold*, and "home" *whome*, "don't" *dwont*, "point" *pwint*, "coat" *cwot*, etc. This view is sustained by a provincial pronunciation exactly analogous to *wun,*

which affords the author of "Tom Brown's School Days" an occasion for a characteristic passage: —

"What is the name of your hill, landlord?"

"Blawin-*stwun* Hill, to be sure."

[READER. *Sturm?*

AUTHOR. *Stone*, stupid! the Blowing *Stone*.]

Here we see a provincial corruption, identical with that which now prevails in the pronunciation of "one." I believe that in this pronunciation we have one of not very rare instances in which the rude and provincial usage has prevailed over that which is cultivated, metropolitan, and analogical. Its prevalence was probably owing to a greater ease with which we can say "a *wone*," or "a *wun*" than "a *own*," and in the very common use of "an" instead of "a" before "one," we have yet farther evidence that this word was not generally pronounced with the *w* sound.

Thus far my time-past memorandum. From other evidence at my hand, I select two items. First, a couplet showing that so late as 1670 even our *once* was pronounced *ones*: —

> The trumpets she does sound at *ones*,
> But both of clean contrary *tones*.
>
> Hudibras, Vol. IV. p. 70.

Next the following very amusing and highly illustrative epigram, which has its point from this very pronunciation: —

A SPELL FOR JONE [JOAN].

> If I am I, and thou art one,
> Tell me, sweet wench, how spellst thou Jone?
> I 'll tell you, sir, and tell you true;
> For I am I, and I am one,[1]
> So I can spell Jone without you,[2]
> And spelling so, can lye alone.
>
> Ancient Ballads and Broadsides, p. 191.

Section C. is "On omissions in consequence of absorption." Observe the title. It is collective; it classifies; it coördinates; it generalizes; and therefore seems attractive and imposing to some persons. The first example is the following from "King Henry VIII.," Act I. Sc. 2: —

> Tongues spit their duties out, and cold hearts freeze
> Allegiance in them: their curses now, etc.

As to which it is said. "Read, *metri gratia*, —

> freeze
> Allegiance in them: *that* their curses now, etc.

[1] *I. e.*, *i* stands for *one*.

[2] *I. e.*, without *u* or *w*.

Not so, surely. *Metri gratia!* Mr. Walker failed to perceive that *allegiance* is a quadrisyllable; which indeed it is, almost, in our daily speech now. The next is the following from "Antony and Cleopatra," Act IV. Sc. 2: —

> I wish I could be made so many men:
> And all of you clapp'd up together in
> An Antony, that I might do you service
> So good as you have done.
> The gods forbid!

It is asked, "Does not the sense imperatively require, 'So good as *y*' have done *me?*'" Not at all. The sense is perfect, like the rhythm, as any one may see. Then we have the following from "Hamlet," Act II. Sc. 2: —

> Well, we shall sift him. — Welcome, my good friends! —

with this comment: "He is addressing the ambassadors for the first time after their return from Norway. *Unde my?* It is not in the folio. I think the occasion absolutely demands, 'Welcome *home*, good friends.'" But Shakespeare, according to the best evidence, did not think so. For Walker's editor, Mr. Lettsom, candidly adds, in a note, that the *my* is from the quartos. And, by the way, the editor is obliged not unfrequently thus to set his author right. The section, which fills twenty-one pages, swarms with misapprehensions, of which these are examples.

Section II. in Vol. I. is on "Passages in Shakespeare in which a compound epithet or participle has been resolved into two simple epithets or an adverb and an epithet," etc. Of this the first example cited is from "Richard II.," Act III. Sc. 2: —

> As a long-parted mother with her child
> Plays fondly with her tears and smiles in meeting,
> So weeping smiling greet I thee my earth.

"Surely," we are told, "Shakespeare wrote, *more suo, weeping-smiling.*" Why? For no good reason. Indeed nothing is gained and much is lost in clearness, in strength, and in the beauty of sobriety by such compounding of participles, each one of which presents a distinct idea, — in this case

two opposed ideas, the opposition and the distinctness of which must be preserved to express contrast. Epithets of quality or action are compounded when the first would otherwise qualify the person or thing to which they pertain in a manner unintended, and often absurd. Thus, in this very speech of Bolingbroke's in the first line quoted above, *long-parted* is compounded, because *long* applies to the parting, and because otherwise we should have a long mother parted from her child. And so a few lines below, "heavy-gaited toads." But "weeping-smiling" is in the style of a sweet girl graduate.

The next example is: —

> A strange tongue makes my cause more strange, suspicious, —
> Henry VIII., Act III. Sc. I.

with the comment: "It is impossible Shakespeare could have perpetrated such an awkwardness. Read *strange-suspicious*." The next: —

> Or if that surly spirit, melancholy,
> Had bak'd the blood, and made it heavy, thick,
> Which else runs tickling up and down the veins.
> King John, Act III. Sc. 3.

Here we are told to read "*heavy-thick*." But, as in Queen Katherine's speech she means to say that a strange tongue makes the cause of a stranger or foreigner (as she was) seem more strange, and adds suspicion to it, so King John means to suppose that melancholy not only made the blood so thick, but so heavy, that it could not run freely.[1] In like manner Mr. Walker would have us read, "'Tis pity she 's not *honest-honourable*," and "*bloody-fiery*," "*honest-true*," and so forth through thirty-four pages! This is mostly waste paper.

Section XXVII. in Vol. I. is headed "Peculiar construction with the adjective." Of this the first example given is Othello's —

> This fellow 's of exceeding honesty,
> And knows all qualities with a learn'd spirit
> Of human dealings, —
> Act III., Sc. 3.

[1] My own edition has *heavy-thick*, by accident. It was corrected when it was discovered.

where it is suggested that the construction is "a spirit learned of [*i. e.*, in] human dealings." Granted for the moment, this is yet a strange example of a peculiar construction with the adjective; as in that case "learned" is purely verbal in sense, and as perfect an example as possible of the definite participle. So in King Lear's —

Thou perjur'd and thou simular man of virtue, —

we are told that we must construe "thou man simular of virtue;" and in "King Henry VI.," —

Bring forth that fatal screech-owl to our house, —

we must read, in mind at least, "that screech-owl fatal to our house." No, — acute, but over-subtle and over-special critic. In all these cases it was the writer's purpose — unconscious, intuitive, and influenced by the free stage style of his day, to present a single compounded idea. For instance, in "Henry VI.," not to say "that owl that screeches and that has always been fatal to our house," but to have the modifying epithet "fatal" apply to *both* the owl and the house; almost as if we should print "fatal-screech-owl-to-our-house." So in the passage from "King Lear." If Shakespeare had wished to present a simple idea, he would surely have written

Thou perjur'd man and simular of virtue.

But he wished to present two men, the perjured man, and the man who is simular of virtue; and he therefore repeated his pronoun, with a conjunction, "and thou;" but he also wished his substantive, *man*, to fulfil its substantive function for both, and therefore he would not write, even if rhythm had permitted, —

Thou perjured, and thou man simular of virtue; —

by which construction *perjured* would have been entirely cut off from *man*. This he did not cogitatively and with deliberately constructive purpose, but instinctively, in the free way in which playwrights then wrote; he, freest and most absolute playwright of them all. It was his way of "bombast-

ing out a blank verse." There are twenty pages of such suggestion, almost wholly futile.

Of Walker's general ability in apprehension of Shakespeare's meaning and in suggestion as to the text, see these few examples of many which I checked in the margin of my copy when the book first came out, since when until now I have not looked at it.

> Hope is a curtail dog in some affairs.
> Merry Wives of Windsor, Act II. Sc. 1.

On which, this amazing comment: "Was the name Hope ever *given to a dog* in those days?" — as to which one must be dumb; except perhaps to say that it rivals Dr. Schmidt's deep and dreadful organ (in the "Tempest") which "would have been unable to pronounce a name."

"If her breath were as terrible as her terminations." (Much Ado about Nothing, Act II. Sc. 1.) Here we are told that *terminations* is "palpably wrong," and Mr. Walker's editor adds that the word "never occurs elsewhere in Shakespeare." What matter? What does that signify? This is the narrowest of views, the most futile of objections. It should never be mentioned — thought of. As I have had occasion to say before, if Shakespeare needed a word but once he would use it but once. This is an instance. *Termination* in the sense of "phrase" was not common in his day; but it was in use.

On *it* in Queen Constance's speech in "King John," —

> Do child, go to it grandam, child, —

it is remarked: "I suspect this is merely an old form for *its*. The old poets certainly employed *it* now and then — probably only under peculiar circumstances — where we should use *its*." Mr. Walker then, with all his reading, so "awfully arrayed" upon slightest provocation, supposed *it* to be "merely an old form," which was "probably used only under peculiar circumstances," writing thus of a word which did not exist when "King John" was written. Mr. Lettsom says, "See on this point Professor Craik's Philological Com-

mentary on Julius Cæsar." But in my edition of the "Comedies," the text (except in one instance, which escaped my attention) had already been regulated, in its since accepted form, as to *it, its,* and *it 's,* and the old usage explained.

The was also used with the possessive force of *its* before the latter came into vogue, as was remarked in my edition of 1857. For example: —

> And I pray you (quoth Aliena) if your robes were off what mettal are you made of that you are so satyrical against women? is it not a foule bird that defiles *the* own nest? Lodge, Euphues, Golden Legacie.

Here the modern editor makes the mistake of reading "*his* own nest," with the marginal note "*The* in the text."

In "King Henry IV.," as to Mistress Doll Tear-Sheet, Walker says that "Coleridge's correction — *Tear-Street* ought to have been made long ago. . . . The corruption must have taken place early; for the name Doll *Tear-Sheet* occurs in Jonson's 'Silent Woman.'" Of Walker and Coleridge I have elsewhere had occasion to remark that as to the right apprehension of Shakespeare they not unfrequently show that they are *arcades ambo. Ecce signum.*

"*Saba* was never more covetous," etc. As to which — "How far is it desirable to retain Shakespeare's ancient spelling in such names?" Shakespeare's ancient spelling! Mr. Walker was a scholar; had he forgotten his Septuagint? "Και βασιλισσα Σαβα ἤκουσε τὸ ὄνομα Σολομῶν." Basileion, Chap. X. 1, and *passim.* And see also many instances of this form in the works of Shakespeare's predecessors and contemporaries; as for example: —

> As wise as *Saba,* or as beautiful
> As was bright Lucifer before his fall.

Indeed, in our early literature *Saba* was the commoner form of the name.

For "that runaway's eyes may wink," Mr. Walker says "Read *Cynthia's* eyes, etc. Possibly, indeed, the word may have been written by mistake without a capital — *cinthiaes* . . . which would render the error more easy. A writer in 'The Gentleman's Magazine' proposes, 'That Luna's eyes,'

etc., and adds, 'We have in "Pericles" the very same expression, —

This by the *eye of Cynthia* hath she vow'd.'

This latter passage might have led him to the true reading." In the names of Shakespeare and common-sense, what have the two passages in "Romeo and Juliet" and "Pericles" to do with each other? What is the relation between them? What the likeness, other than that there is an "eye" in both? O Fluellen, your salmons, your salmons! This confidently produced emendation is not only one of the very worst of the many needlessly proposed in this passage, but, what is of most importance, it is noteworthy for its manifestation of a thorough misapprehension of the passage, that need by no means be exhibited even in elaborating a conjectural reading which on the whole is quite unacceptable.

By this time I think it must be pretty plain to my readers that what with articles of twenty and thirty pages, like those I have just remarked upon, and others that merely suggest what had been already taken into the text or adopted as interpretation, and others which are of too trivial a nature for remark, Mr. Walker's "Critical Examination" is not a work of much value or interest to the critical student of Shakespeare's text; certainly not one which should be treated with any deference. Its real worth is shown, as I have before remarked, by the fact that, although it was published twenty-four years ago, it has had scarcely any effect upon the text. Even Mr. Dyce, although he is led by his friendly consideration for Walker's editor to refer to the book much oftener than he had need, adopts little or nothing from it. When Walker ventures into textual emendation he nearly always goes astray in an alarming manner. And yet he is the author of one of the happiest restorations in the received text: — "Her *infinite cunning* and her modern grace," for "Her insuite comming," etc., of the folio (All 's Well That Ends Well. Act. V. Sc. 3), which I believe I was the first to welcome publicly.[1] If, like one

[1] *Shakespeare's Scholar*, 1854.

of his earliest critics, we must say, "Very often we find ourselves differing from Mr. Walker on readings and interpretations," with him we must also add, "but we seldom differ from him without respect for his scholarship and care," — scholarship and care, but not insight, as to either thought or language.

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